

**Primitive Methodist  
Church.**

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LYNN & CAMBRIDGE  
DISTRICT.

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1807—1907.

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**Centenary  
Souvenir.**

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# PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH.

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LYNN & CAMBRIDGE DISTRICT.

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## “The Tale of the Years:”

A CENTENARY SOUVENIR,

COMPILED BY

E. A. HARVEY,

AND

*Published under the auspices of the District Centenary  
Committee.*

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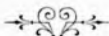
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## P R E F A C E.

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*The publication of this Centenary Souvenir has furnished an opportunity for putting into a suitable form for preservation to future generations many incidents in connection with the establishment of Primitive Methodism in those places which now form the Lynn and Cambridge District of the Primitive Methodist Church.*

*In undertaking this work, at the request of the District Centenary Committee, the writer thanks the members of that Committee for their confidence. However, although privileged to carry through the work of compiling the book, he has been much indebted to those ministers and laymen, who have so willingly assisted in the gathering together of the facts and incidents recorded,—some by collecting historic notes, others by lending old circuit and other plans, magazines, and photos,—and to the REV. C. SHREEVE, for revising the manuscript; to all these he tenders hearty thanks. He also acknowledges his indebtedness to the various books referred to herein, and thanks the authors for the use of the same.*

*The space allotted for this work is far too small to give a full record of the establishment of Primitive Methodism at all the places referred to, but, if these pages shall create a thirst for a completer knowledge of the history of the denomination in the district covered by this book, we hope there may be found in each of the Circuits a historian, who will put into permanent form "The Tale of the Years" for his Circuit.*

E. A. HARVEY.

WATTON, NORFOLK,

JANUARY 1ST, 1908.

# THE FOUNDERS OF PRIMITIVE METHODISM.



HUGH BOURNE.



WILLIAM CLOWES.

# "THE TALE OF THE YEARS."

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## CHAPTER I.

### Life in East Anglia.

**T**HE history of Primitive Methodism in many parts of the homeland presents a record of stirring events and glorious triumphs equal to the records of missionary work on the foreign fields, and in no part of the country is its history more full of noble deeds and heroic labours than in East Anglia.

The purpose of this brochure is to give a brief sketch of the work done by some of the pioneers of Primitive Methodism in that part of East Anglia now designated as the "Lynn and Cambridge District." If, however, we are to fully appreciate the work done by our forefathers, we must bring in review the condition of the populace in the early years of the last century, and the general state of life in our East Anglian towns and villages.

Canon Jessop, who during his years in the rectory at Scarning, made the history of Norfolk his own, says, "During the nine years ending with 1808, there were committed to the four prisons of Wymondham, Aylsham, Walsingham, and Norwich Castle, the enormous aggregate of 2,336 men and women, to whom we may be sure little mercy was shewn." We have only to turn to the historical books of the period to learn the offences for which these were imprisoned. The masses of the people, in town and village, were ignorant and shockingly degraded. Some villages were without religious ordinances of any kind, and, as a consequence, the people were

given up to drunkenness, vice, and brutal sports, which were indulged in more freely and with greater zest on the Sabbath than on any other day of the week. Prize-fighting, cock-fighting (in Norfolk this seems to have been a passion,—shopkeepers in the small towns, publicans, and farmers, used to have cocks boarded out in every village), dog-fighting, public gambling, feuds between the inhabitants of one parish and those of another, often ending in pitched battles, football played on the village greens in brutal manner, were the favourite modes of spending Sunday in the villages. Added to these, there was a general coarseness in the language of the people, blasphemy, and a loose regard of morality.

We need also to remember that between 1810 and 1840 was a period of dangerous crises in the history of the country. The cause of this was a combination of events following each other in quick succession. The labourers were becoming dissatisfied with their long hours and low wages; the close of the long war with Napoleon necessitated the disbanding of thousands of soldiers, which suddenly dislocated the labour market; then the cruel corn laws made food and other commodities extremely dear, reducing the country to the verge of ruin; and with all this came the invention of various kinds of machinery, which threw many out of employment, and embittered the relations of masters and men. Whilst there were secret drillings on the moorlands in the northern counties, and the storing of ammunition, in expectation of a general rising in the country, with rioting in some towns, and the massacre of Peterloo in 1819, in East Anglia incendiarism became rife, and corn stacks and farm premises had to be vigilantly guarded every night.

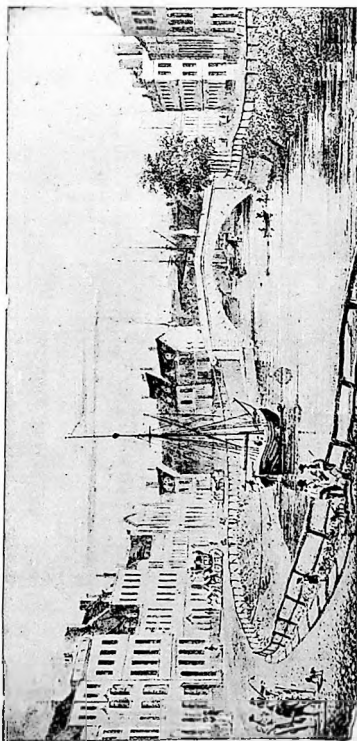
One illustration of what this meant will indicate the fear and dread that was general with the farmers in these parts, lest any night they might be burned out of their houses. Mr. R. Wheaton, farmer, of Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire, told the Rev. Robert Key, when he was on the Cambridge Circuit in 1846-7, that in that parish there used to be "a gang of desperadoes, who had plotted a scheme to burn down a whole parish, and they actually succeeded in destroying sixteen houses, and burning sixteen families out of house and home." Mr. Wheaton continued, "you may put these fellows into jail, or upon the treadmill, and they will come out the same devils as they went



in; but if the grace of God get into their hearts, it will change them, and that alone, for nothing else can do it." He further

told Mr. Key that he paid a man two shillings a night, during the whole of the winter, to watch his premises; "even then," said Mr. Wheaton, "we went to bed full of fear lest we should be burnt out before the morning: we were in constant dread. But, thank God, it is not so now. Your people came here, and sung, and preached, and prayed about the streets (you could not get these fellows into a church or chapel); the word was brought to bear upon them in the open-air, it fastened upon their guilty hearts, and they are now good men in your Church." He then gave Mr. Key a list of the names of the conspirators, and declared that the neighbourhood

was not like the same place. Mr. Key replied, "I think, Mr. Wheaton, you ought, in common justice, to allow me a pension for life; for, according to your own statement, I have saved



VIEW FROM THE NORTH BRINK, WISBECH. EARLY 19TH CENTURY.



VIEW FROM THE NORTH BRINK, WISBECH. EARLY 19TH CENTURY.

you fourteen shillings a week in cash, besides the fear, anxiety, trouble, and expense I have saved other people." Mr. Wheaton smiled and said, "Well, bless you! I will give you ten pounds," which amount, Mr. Key says, was very thankfully received.

Another feature we need to notice in the life of the people is the witchcraft and superstition which abounded in the villages of East Anglia in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Witchcraft was resorted to for finding out those who had committed crime or were guilty of other wrong doing, and although the one punished as the perpetrator of the deed was probably more often than otherwise "not guilty," yet this method of fixing on wrong-doers was continued in many villages even into the second half of the last century. Then, again, the witchcraft resorted to in cases of sickness, and even after death, had happily freed the victim from pain, serve to reveal to us a sidelight on life in the villages in years gone by.

In connection with the superstition of the people, Dr. Jessop, in his "Arcady: for Better, for Worse," says, "so universally prevalent is the belief in '*old providence*,' and his cruel machinations, that I have heard it positively affirmed that there is not a parish in Norfolk without its 'wise woman.' This is certainly an exaggeration, but, it is beyond question that there are very few parishes in Arcady where you could not find some one who has consulted the 'wise woman' or the 'cunning man.'" But we must not confuse '*old providence*' with that Providence which—

"Shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them how we will."

Those who spoke of '*old providence*' distinguished between the two, as may be seen from the following, which we cull from Dr. Jessop's book:

"One of the earliest visits of a new vicar in a village was one of condolence to a small farmer, who had lost his wife, and was left desolate and alone. The vicar spake such comfort as he could, and more than once insisted on the obvious truth that the ordering of Divine Providence must not be murmured at, but submitted to with resignation. The sorrowing farmer

\* "Arcady: for Better, for Worse," by Canon Jessop, D.D.  
Published by T. Fisher Unwin.

listened patiently and silently for some minutes. At last, he could refrain no longer, saying, "That's right enough, that is! There's no use gainsayin' it; but, somehow, that there '*old providence*' hev been agin me all along. Why, last year he mos' spoilt my taters, and the year afore that he kinder did for my tunnips, and now he's been and got hold o' my missus! But," he added, "I reckon as there's *One abev* as'll put a stopper on ha if 'a go too fur!'" This incident, whilst not revealing to us the life of the people in the earlier part of the nineteenth century (it occurred in 1877), yet shows us the superstition that prevailed in village life even as recently as thirty years ago.

Into the seething mass of misery, vice, superstition, and discontent, briefly outlined in this chapter, there came in the years following 1820 a new force, which was destined to change the moral tone of East Anglia, and uplift socially, educationally, and politically the masses of the people who lived in its towns and villages. That new force was Primitive Methodism.

The historian's record, the marble monument, the poet's song, the trophied column, have all been employed to perpetuate the name of the hero, the monarch, and the patriot. Be it ours to tell in the following pages the story of some of the "Soldiers of the Cross." Concerning many of the pioneers of Primitive Methodism in East Anglia,—intrepid preachers, valiant leaders, and earnest continuous workers, it may be truly said—

"Yet few remember *them*. They toiled unknown  
Till persecution dragged them into fame."



## CHAPTER II.

**The Coming of the "Primitives."**

"PRIMITIVE METHODISTS" was the name adopted on February 13th, 1812, by the new body formed through the union of the Camp Meeting Methodists and the Clowesites, two evangelistic agencies which had sprung into existence in the Mow Cop district of Staffordshire, and had made Camp Meetings—open-air services—the chief plank in their evangelistic work. The first Camp Meeting was held on Mow Cop, Sunday, May 31st, 1807. This new denomination began to spread and increase in the number of its adherents with great rapidity. Tunstall became the first circuit in the new denomination, and Nottingham became the second. A great Camp Meeting in Nottingham Forest, on Whit-Sunday, 1816, attended by 12,000 people, ushered in the great revival of 1817-18. In 1817 the revival was mainly in Notts with extensions into Lincolnshire. Many preachers were raised up, who in their turn became the enlargers of the Connexion, and included two, Messrs. John Oscroft and Thomas Charlton, who were destined to play a prominent part in the introduction of Primitive Methodism into East Anglia,—the former more especially in the now Lynn and Cambridge District. The Nottingham Missionaries by 1820 had found their way into south-east Lincolnshire, and this Mission led the way into Norfolk, as is shown by the following statement of John Oscroft, which we quote from the now recognised standard work on the Connexion's history \* :—"When I commenced travelling (in May, 1821), Boston was a branch of Nottingham Circuit. In a fortnight after beginning to travel I was sent to labour in that branch. About six weeks afterwards Boston was made a circuit. I was appointed to labour in this branch with five other preachers, though at this time there was not sufficient work for two. We, therefore, opened a mission in the county of Norfolk, where the work of the Lord spread rapidly, and

\* "The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church,"  
by H. B. Kendall, B.A.

hundreds were soon converted to God." The "we" in this statement doubtless meant the writer of it and Thomas Charlton, then young men of about twenty-three or twenty-four years of age.

Journeying into Norfolk by way of Wisbech, King's Lynn was naturally, from its position and importance as a base for future operations, one of the first places they visited. From the very first they met here with an encouraging measure of success; so much so indeed, that a letter written at the time affirms—"The Primitives are carrying all before them in King's Lynn." The leader of the first class formed is said to have been Mr. Streader, whose son, Mr. W. T. Streader, has saved so many lives from drowning, and the recital of whose exploits make up a goodly volume.\* But, unfortunately, disaster soon overtook the promising cause, for in 1822, only a year after starting, the members had become numerous enough to make division amongst themselves. It is of no use now to rake up the causes of that division, but an old document says, "it weakened the society very much for a short time." However, Messrs. Charlton and Whitby were sent from Nottingham to investigate the matter. God blessed their labours, and prosperity again attended the efforts of the young Church.

In April, 1821, a plan was printed, says John Oscroft, for the Norfolk Mission, and the names of fifty-seven places appeared on it. At the beginning of 1823 Nottingham Circuit had six branches, four of which were Lynn, Norwich, Fakenham, and Cambridge. These centres, as probably also Wisbech and Upwell, with adjacent villiages, would be among the fifty-seven places on that first plan for Primitive Methodism in East Anglia.

We regret that so little is known of the earlier history of the Fakenham and Upwell Circuits. There is but little information obtainable as to the first planting of our church in these localities. It was so when the Rev. John Petty wrote his History of the Connexion, and it is now too late to expect that the facts can be recovered. However, we are able to present our readers with a copy of an early plan of the Fakenham branch (it is believed to be the first printed plan). From this it will be seen that the branch had thirty-eight places on it

\* "To the Rescue," being the Life of W. T. Streader,  
by Rev S. Horton.



# Week Day Plan.

1923.		July	August	September	October		
PLACES.	Days	28	1 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20		
Catford.....	M	8	5	6	2	1	1 E. Woodford
Sutton.....	T	8	5	6	2	1	2 W. Brathwaite
North Creek.....	W	8	5	6	2	1	3 S. Chapman
Stable.....	Th	8	5	6	2	1	4 W. Cooper
Bertham.....	F	8	5	6	2	1	5 W. Martin
Thursford.....	M	7	8	5	P	2	6 J. Mundy
Horsingham.....	T	7	8	5	7	2	7 M. Redburn
Burghstead.....	W	7	8	5	6	2	8
Sharnham.....	Th	7	8	5	6	2	
Bideford.....	F	7	8	5	6	2	
Kilham.....	M	7	8	5	6	2	
Aylmerton.....	T	7	8	5	6	2	
Northwold.....	W	7	8	5	6	2	
Thorp Watlington.....	Th	7	8	5	6	2	
Southwold.....	F	7	8	5	6	2	
Bodham.....	M	2	10	8	6	3	
Misham.....	T	2	10	8	P	3	
Great Wootton.....	W	2	10	8	6	3	
Boughton.....	Th	2	10	8	6	3	
Sotter.....	F	2	10	8	6	3	
Lower Sharnham.....	M	2	2	1	5	6	
Upper Sharnham.....	T	2	2	1	5	6	
Chilham.....	W	2	2	1	5	6	
Chalton.....	Th	2	2	1	5	6	
City.....	F	2	2	1	5	6	
Bakenham.....	M	6	2	1	5	6	
Field Ditch.....	T	6	2	1	5	6	
Wighton.....	W	6	2	1	5	6	
Holkham.....	Th	6	2	1	5	6	
Wells.....	F	6	2	1	5	6	
Guthorpe.....	M	6	2	1	5	6	
Little Hyburnham.....	T	6	2	1	5	6	
Little Stowton.....	W	6	2	1	5	6	
Great Stowton.....	Th	6	2	1	5	6	
Walsingham.....	F	6	2	1	5	6	
Misson.....	M	5	6	2	5	6	
Boughton.....	T	5	6	2	5	6	
Doughton.....	W	5	6	2	5	6	
Southwold.....	Th	5	6	2	5	6	
Fakenham.....	F	5	6	2	5	6	
Lincoln.....	M	5	6	2	5	6	
Wellingham.....	T	5	6	2	5	6	
Holkham.....	W	5	6	2	5	6	
Ranham.....	Th	5	6	2	5	6	
Hempston.....	F	5	6	2	5	6	
Thornage.....	M	8	6	2	5	6	
Langham.....	T	8	6	2	5	6	
Sniffkey.....	W	8	6	2	5	6	
Sniffkey.....	Th	8	6	2	5	6	
Sniffkey.....	F	8	6	2	5	6	
Baronclough.....	M	2	4	3	4	3	
Plumstead.....	T	2	4	3	4	3	
Edgfield.....	W	2	4	3	4	3	
Briston.....	Th	2	4	3	4	3	
Swanton.....	F	2	4	3	4	3	
Hindveston.....	M	1	3	4	P	3	
Imbury.....	T	1	3	4	P	3	
Embsay.....	W	1	3	4	P	3	
Gaswick.....	Th	1	3	4	P	3	
Wood Ditch.....	F	1	3	4	P	3	
Hepton.....	M	4	3	4	P	3	
SM.....	T	4	3	4	P	3	
Thorpington.....	W	4	3	4	P	3	
Canham.....	Th	4	3	4	P	3	
Cornham.....	F	4	3	4	P	3	
Hardingham.....	M	3	4	3	P	4	
Outon.....	T	3	4	3	P	4	
W.....	W	3	4	3	P	4	
Aylsham.....	Th	3	4	3	P	4	
Hickingham.....	F	3	4	3	P	4	



at which Sunday Services were held, and sixty-seven places for week-day services, with seven travelling preachers appointed, and presumably an eighth one expected. A study of this plan, which was printed on the two sides of one sheet, will show that the ministers were sometimes absent from their homes for a whole month, during which time they were 'travelling round' the branch.

Our early preachers were not called "Itinerant Ministers" for nothing. Practically adopting the saying of John Wesley as their motto, "The world is my parish," they indeed went from place to place, preaching and singing the Gospel of Christ. Trusting in God for their daily bread, often subsisting on the fruits they could gather from the hedges by the roadside, or getting a meal at night from the kindness of some whose hearts had been touched through their labours, we can easily understand that it was not all pleasure, or what the world calls pleasure, to be a Primitive Methodist minister in those days. In 1822 the rule was, "that single men are to be paid a salary *not exceeding* £4 a quarter, and he shall not be allowed to bring in any bill or bills either for meat, drink, washing, lodging, or medical aid of any kind." Married men were to be paid a sum *not exceeding* 14/- per week, with the same conditions attached respecting bills, etc. It may be safely asserted that the instances were few and far between, where the ministers got their full salary even at that rate.

Noticing the work at Lynn after prosperity returned to its borders, we find that the villages for a long distance round were missioned, many persons were converted and many societies formed, so that in 1824 Lynn and the adjacent places were formed into a circuit. The first *stand* of the missionaries is said to have been outside the South gates; the first *place* the missionary had to preach in was a sailmaker's loft, and in this a congregation was gathered and some gracious times were experienced.

Leaving Lynn for the present we notice some incidents in the early history of Fakenham Circuit. Although there are apparently no records now of the actual planting of Primitive Methodism in the town and adjacent villages, yet an old minute book, presumably the first one, gives some interesting particulars as to the early history of the circuit. This book begins with the minutes of the quarter-day of Fakenham Branch of

Nottingham Circuit, held December 2nd, 1822. Prior to the commencement of the regular business of the meeting the



BENNET'S YARD, WHERE FIRST PREACHING SERVICES WERE HELD IN KING'S LYNN.

following resolutions were carried, and are entered in the book under the heading "Preliminary Motions":—

1. That prayer be made every hour for five minutes.
2. That Bro. Stimpson be time-keeper.
3. That every speaker address the chairman.
4. That if any brother interrupt another while speaking, he shall for each offence forfeit one penny.
5. That if Bro. Stimpson exceeds the time he shall forfeit twopence.

These, then, were the first "standing orders" for a Primitive Methodist quarterly meeting at Fakenham. Probably similar regulations were framed for the quarterly meetings of other circuits. The first three we should do well to hold by even in our meetings to-day; as to the other two, we will dismiss them with the one remark, "other times, other methods."

Reading over the minutes of the preachers' meeting of that first quarterly meeting, two resolutions call for a passing reference. There is a little irony in the thought that the *first* resolution of this first preachers' meeting is "that Bro. Oscroft speak to Bro.— on the subject of neglecting his appointment at Gatesend." The subject of "neglects" thus very early came before East Anglian Primitive Methodist quarterly meetings, and, alas! it has continued unto this day. Another resolution at this meeting sanctions the coming on the plan, as an exhorter, of a certain brother, but that he have "a fictitious name inserted to his number." Why this was deemed necessary, or even desirable, we are not told; but, remembering the relations between employer and employed at that time, and the means some of the early adherents of Primitive Methodism were compelled to adopt to hide their identity with the new denomination, we can read between the lines as to why this course was probably resolved on. This brother evidently succeeded as a preacher, for at the quarterly meeting in the June following he was raised to "on trial" (see No. 17 on the old plan given on a previous page); at the following quarter-day he was put on "full plan."

At the full board of this first quarterly meeting it was resolved "that Norwich be a branch of Nottingham Circuit separate from Fakenham, and that the division take place December 30th"; also "that three men and a woman be appointed to labour in the Norwich Branch, and that Fakenham Branch have three men and a woman." The ministers appointed to the two branches were as follows: Norwich—Revs. Oscroft (super), Dawson, Chapman, and Sister Birch; Fakenham—Revs. Woodford (super), Braithwaite, Kinsley, and sister Woolfit. The stewards elected for the Fakenham Branch were "Bro. Wright (treasurer) and Bro. Colman (secretary)," with the following as the Branch Committee—"Bros. Mason, Seppings, Clarke, Loose, Butters, and Thompson and Wright, of Sculthorpe." The income for the quarter was £41/14/4½

and the outgo £41/11/7½. The accounts show £4 as salary paid to each of the ministers; we may infer, therefore, that none of these were married men or married women.

These were evidently days of prosperity for the Fakenham Branch, as at the following quarterly meeting, having started Norwich Branch off as a separate centre of work, Fakenham deemed it desirable to increase their ministerial staff; hence, it was resolved, "That we have six preachers and a woman labouring in this branch next quarter." The membership reported to this meeting, March, 1823, was 458 full and 80 on trial.

At the June quarterly meeting it was unanimously agreed that the branch be made into a circuit. This was evidently soon carried into effect as the minutes for September, 1823, are headed "Fakenham Circuit," and at this meeting it was decided to divide the circuit into three parts, namely, the home branch (Fakenham), Corpusty, and North Walsham. Six travelling preachers were appointed to labour on the circuit. At the quarterly meeting, March, 1824, the new circuit was entitled to elect its first delegates to the district meeting to be held at Nottingham, and we find Bro. Woodford elected as travelling preacher delegate and Bros. Smith and Wright as lay delegates. A question seems to have arisen as to paying the expenses of the delegates to the district meeting. A special meeting of the circuit committee was called, and it was resolved, "That the money cannot be paid to defray the expenses to the district meeting." This, however, was only acted upon for the one year, as in August, 1825, we find a resolution, "That the bill of the delegates expenses be paid."

In reading through the minutes of the preachers' meetings at the various quarter days of Fakenham Circuit, one cannot fail to be struck with the very large number of preachers being taken off the plan for various reasons, including debt, intemperance, harvest frolicking, improper conduct, quarrelling, bad language, gambling, non-attendance at means of grace, and often neglect of appointments. We only refer to this here, because what was the experience of one circuit was probably experienced by others also, and we are thankful to know that in most circuits many of these charges are never heard of to-day.

However, the subject of neglect of appointments calls for more than a passing reference,—firstly, because of the means adopted by Fakenham Circuit for dealing with the delinquents, and secondly, because of its existence in some circuits even at the present time. At first, the ministers were desired to visit the offenders and urge on them better attention to their appointments in the future. Then, probably because of the persistency of the delinquents, it was resolved that a preacher who neglects an appointment shall drop a number on the plan, and if he neglects two appointments he shall drop two numbers, and so on. This rule was printed on the plan, but it does not appear to have had the desired effect, for only two years later it was resolved, in addition to dropping them a number on the plan, "That the name of every preacher who neglects an appointment shall stand on the plan at the end of the rule, and thus be exposed for one quarter." Even this did not apparently much improve matters, as four years afterwards it was resolved to add to the names printed on the plan at the end of the rule, the reasons why their names appeared there. Two years after this, as a final warning before striking their names off the plan altogether, it was resolved, "That there be a book provided, and that the same be called the 'black book,' to insert in the names of those who neglect their appointments, and that a note be put on the plan to request the societies to send up *all* the neglects during the quarter." We conclude this must have had the desired effect, as the only other reference to the question during the next ten years is a repetition of the request to the societies to send particulars of all the neglects to the quarterly meetings. The number of entries in the 'black book' is not recorded in the minutes.

Other minutes record that from time to time letters were sent to the preachers (male and female), concerning their personal appearance.

Following up our review of the establishment of the denomination in East Anglia, we may say that although we have dealt with Lynn first and Fakenham second, to the latter belongs the honour of being the oldest *circuit* in the Lynn and Cambridge District, indeed it is the oldest circuit in East Anglia. Fakenham Circuit was formed in June, 1823; Lynn and Cambridge, with their adjacent places, became circuits in March, 1824. Cambridge, therefore, now claims our attention.

Primitive Methodism was introduced into Cambridge by one, Joseph Reynolds by name. In August, 1821, he reached here, having journeyed from far distant Tunstall. The following letter, written by Bro. Reynolds to the Tunstall Circuit Committee, will give a more vivid description of his experiences, if inserted literally as written, than if its errors of composition are corrected. Hence, we give it without alteration :

Barnwell, near Cambridge, August 8, 1821.

"Dear Brethren,—I wish to spend my health and strength for God's glory and the good of souls. When I left Tunstall I gave myself up to labour and sufferings, and I have had them; but they have been for God's glory. My sufferings are known only to God and myself. I have many times been knocked down while preaching; and I have had many sore bones, but God was with me. Once I was knocked down by the people, trampled under the feet of the crowd, had my clothes torn, my money taken from me, and in consequence of this, I had to suffer much hunger. On another occasion, I had travelled thirty miles with a penny cake, then preached at night to about 2,000 people. I was scarcely able to stand; and, after all, supped on cold cabbage. Then, being unwilling to express my necessities, I was driven to lodge for the night in the fields, where I slept under a haystack until four o'clock in the morning, when I was awoken by the birds. I arose, and proceeded to the town, where I preached at five to a many people. Thence, I proceeded to Cambridge (where I have been a fortnight), and preached to a large congregation, with a body almost worn down with hunger and fatigue. That day I was glad to eat the pea-husks on the road, as I walked along. Nevertheless, I believe all things have worked together for good; hundreds will bless God in eternity for having sent unworthy Reynolds here. There are few Methodists in this county.

"Cambridge is a large county town, and has hundreds of ministers in it; yet there is very little preaching, and thousands of people are living in iniquity. In a general way, they are very desirous of hearing the Word; still, it may truly be said, "No man careth for their souls." The few Methodists, and other professing people are dead and formal. I have suffered a little persecution, but now it is dropping, and thousands flock to hear the Word of Life. I have many times seen them in tears, and souls have been converted to God every day. I have been called up in a morning to pray with persons who have been wrestling all night for God to pardon their sins. Truly, God has been saving by whole families.

"I was praying in one house (where the residents had sent for me), and all the family, with three servants, were converted to God. At another place and time, we had five more brought in, and the neighbours seem to wonder "how these things can be." Sinners are frequently falling down and crying for mercy. Hallelujah! Some have come many miles, burthened with sin, and have gone home rejoicing. I cannot describe fully what a work there is about Cambridge. Letters have been sent to me, requesting me to visit more places than I could attend,

and the people want me to join them in societies. O, what *has* God done, and *might* do, if the work were followed up! I regret having to leave them; but I am compelled, for the following reasons. First. Being a Primitive Methodist preacher, I did not like to expose my wants, though the people would have given me as much money as I wanted. Again, the *Methodists* said, "He only preaches for money." So I would not receive any. Second. If I joined the people in society, they would require a successive supply of preaching. O, the Providence that sent me to Cambridge."

There is but little other information available of the planting of the denomination in Cambridge. In March, 1824, it was a branch of Nottingham Circuit, but about to be made a circuit itself. The two preachers on it are to be lent to it until the District Meeting, and the new circuit is requested not to appoint delegates to the said District Meeting unless they can pay their own expenses. At Midsummer in the same year, William Clowes and John Nelson were at Cambridge for the purpose of re-opening the chapel, which had been enlarged by the putting in of a gallery. Clowes, preaching in the evening, had a sprinkling of collegians in his congregation, while the Wesleyan superintendent assisted in taking up the collection. The curtain drops here and the history of Cambridge circuit is for a time lost to view.

The early history of Upwell Circuit, now obtainable, is very scant indeed, and in the absence of other information, its chief claim for notice must rest on the active part it took in early missionary enterprise, and the fact that it was one of the six circuits with which Norwich District was formed. However, although there is little to record about Upwell Circuit in its early years, there are a few facts to relate concerning the missioning of some of the places on the circuit. Rev. H. B. Kendall, in his history, says, "At that time, what was known as Marshland Fen, at the western extremity of Norfolk, was a desolate and barren region. Little of it was then under cultivation, and the moral conditions of its inhabitants was conformable to their surroundings. They habitually disregarded the Sabbath, and might have said with the navvy, 'Sunday has not cropped out here yet'; for there were no ministers or places for public worship."

Wisbech, first a part and then a branch of Upwell Circuit, was visited by the Nottingham missionaries, John Oscroft and Thomas Charlton, on their way into Norfolk in 1821. It is

said, they crossed the Wash at what is now known as Sutton Bridge, where King John lost his crown jewels and other treasures, only escaping with his life, soon to end an inglorious career at Newark Castle. The passage of the noble-hearted missionaries of the Cross, unlike this, was attended with results of the greatest blessing. Bringing with them the life-giving Word, which is able to make men wise unto salvation, the fruits of their labours were seen in after years, and abide to-day in renewed lives, happy hearts and homes, and Christian communities throughout the district covered by their work.

There was a strong opposition to them and much prejudice, consequently, but slow progress was made. The first services in Wisbech were, as usual, held in the open air, but an early convert, a tinker or sweep (traditions vary) opened his cottage in Hogherd's Lane for worship. After a time a room was hired in the old Horse Fair, and fitted up for worship, but as the society were only sub-tenants, and the tenant failing to pay the rent the landlord seized the fittings for the debt. Manea, another place on the old Upwell Circuit, was also one of the first places missioned in Cambridgeshire, a society being formed here as early as 1822, and the services conducted in a cottage in School Lane. By 1825, Upwell with the adjacent places had become a circuit.

Fakenham, Lynn, Cambridge, and Upwell were, thus, the primary circuits of the area now covered by the Lynn and Cambridge District. We shall see in the succeeding chapters how at varying intervals these four circuits gave birth to others, and how other circuits were brought into existence by some of the older circuits on the present Norwich District.

In their pioneer work the founders of Primitive Methodism in these localities had for their pulpits, a table, a chair, a tub, a waggon, a cottage step, or a grassy hillock, and the scenes of their holy and successful labours were the market place, the village green, the sea beach, or the flowering meadow, until as years rolled by their converts were led to erect sanctuaries, at first truly "primitive" in style, for their worship of Him who had saved, and so abundantly blessed, them.

Amidst scoffing men, face to face with frowning prelates, in opposition to the threats of magistrates, these missionaries of



the Cross, by the grace of God, were enabled to transform entire neighbourhoods and turned many from darkness to light. How they did this, is well summed up in a remark by the eminent John Angell James, in his work, entitled "Protestant Nonconformity." He says, "The Primitive Methodists have persevered in meekness and in gentleness, and have conquered by their passive power."

Most of these founders now "rest from their labours," and truly, "Their works follow them."

"For all thy saints, who from their labours rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be for ever blest :  
Hallelujah !

"Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might ;  
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight ;  
Thou in the darkness drear their Light of Light :  
Hallelujah !"



## CHAPTER III.

**The Primary Circuits.**

THE four circuits referred to in the preceding chapter with Norwich and Yarmouth were made into a new District by the Conference of 1825, with 13 ministers and 1546 members.

Rev. H. B. Kendall in the new history says, "No doubt this step was taken because it was thought it would conduce to the more economical and effective administration of the stations themselves. Such at least is the conclusion to which we must come after reading what Hugh Bourne has bluntly written on the subject: 'In 1825, Norwich District was *formed of six shattered circuits* from Nottingham District, with 1546 members. These had been injured by employing improper characters.' After this we must not picture to ourselves these first East Anglian circuits as starting on their careers with the vigour and freshness of young athletes. There is much that we cannot know, and need not care to know, implied in those words 'shattered circuits.'"

Remarkable progress, however, was made by these circuits during the years 1825 to 1842, for, says the Rev. H. B. Kendall, "By that time the Norwich District had become practically co-extensive with what we know as East Anglia," and consisted of 19 circuits with 59 ministers and 9,072 members.

In the year 1825, the Rev. W. G. Bellham was appointed to Lynn, his native place, and began his twenty-four years of service in the Norwich District, then in but a rudimentary condition. He had a heavy task before him; but he bravely set himself in the spirit of Nehemiah, to carry out the much needed work of building a chapel for the increasing congregation to worship in. The members at that time were mostly poor working people, and could not render much assistance. But, Mr. Bellham had a very inventive mind, and here was a fine opportunity for his ingenuity. The expedients he resorted to

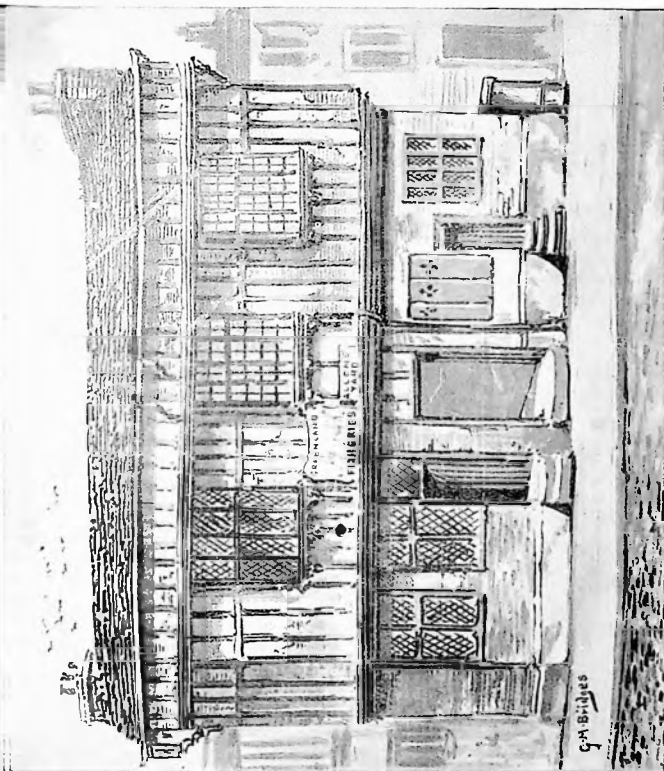
were of a very novel character. He succeeded in exciting in the children, both of town and country, the most lively interest in the affair, and set them at work to collect farthings. So great was the excitement among the juveniles, that the farthing mania laid hold of the whole circuit. One village was so thoroughly canvassed and drained, that it was said, "There was not one farthing to be found in the place, and one little



THE FIRST PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL,  
LONDON ROAD, KING'S LYNN.

girl went a distance of three miles to exchange a penny for four farthings." The reports of these things ran through the circuit, and excited so much enthusiasm, that it gave a mighty impetus to the whole affair, and Mr. Bellham's farthing scheme was enthusiastically talked of for many a day. The topstone was, however, at last brought on with shouts of triumph. Like most of our early chapels, it was not a very imposing structure, it laid no claim to any architectural beauty, there was no lofty spire outside, nor Gothic arches or Corinthian pillars inside,

neither was it elaborately furnished ; it was lighted with candles, in tin candlesticks fastened to the walls ; and many of the seats



ALLEN'S YARD, WHERE THE FIRST PRIMITIVE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL WAS HELD IN KING'S LYNN.

were common forms. Yet, often and often the glory of God descended in that place, as in many another similar building



ALLEN'S YARD, WHERE THE FIRST PRIMITIVE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL  
WAS HELD IN KING'S LYNN.

erected as years rolled by, the Holy Spirit's quickening power was felt, and hundreds of men and women were converted in these sanctuaries, and brought to rejoice in the knowledge that their sins were forgiven them, through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

In addition to the building of the chapel Mr. Bellham started a Sunday School at Lynn, on Oct. 2nd, 1825, with 66 children, none of whom had been to any other Sunday School. The first superintendent of the school was James Garner, but he held the position less than two years, being called to the ministry in 1827. The school prospered greatly, and the children had to be accommodated in various parts of the town as the years went by—some in Norfolk Street, some in Railway Passage, and others in Ostler's Yard, whilst the infants met in Bridge Street.

Whilst the history of Primitive Methodism in Lynn began anew with the coming of Mr. Bellham to the station, he also enlarged the bounds of the circuit by missioning Swaffham, Litcham, and other places in those localities. The account of this extension shall be told by Mr. Bellham in his own inimitable way. He says,—\*

"On Lord's day, July 24, 1825, I attended a camp-meeting near Swaffham, in Norfolk. It was called the Castleacre camp-meeting. At the close of that meeting, I published where the travelling preachers would preach during the week; adding, 'I have no appointment for the Wednesday evening. Where shall I go? Now, I'll go anywhere.' A man of the name of Daniel Banham cried out 'Come to Litcham.' Thus my appointments for the week were all filled up.

On Wednesday, July 27, 1825, for the first time, I entered Litcham. Daniel Banham was ready, standing in the street, and his very countenance seemed to say, 'I welcome you in love.' We went round the place, and invited the people to come and hear the Word of Life. I mounted a chair against the stocks, and sung the 45th hymn, small book. By the time the hymn was sung, a very large congregation were assembled, and all were as silent as possible. Indeed their decent behaviour exclaimed aloud to my heart, 'O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.' Many did kneel, and while I engaged in the solemn act of prayer, I found the throne of grace accessible through Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God helped my infirmities—mercy unfolded its doors, and salvation seemed to flow all around.

\* "Gospel Victories or Missionary Anecdotes of Imprisonments, Labours, and Persecutions, endured by Primitive Methodist Preachers, between the years 1812 and 1844," compiled by Thomas Church.



THE PRESENT CHAPEL, LONDON ROAD, KING'S LYNN.

I arose from the dust with a heart affected with the importance of my work; my soul was melted down before God, and the burning love I felt towards my fellow creatures, caused the tears of deep concern to flow from my eyes. My heart said, "Lord save me." We sung "Direct me in the way, O Lord," &c. I then opened the book of God, written by Himself, and read, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul." The ears of the people were chained to my lips. O what an attentive congregation was this! I finished my discourse with these words, "May your souls, the souls of your children, and my soul find mercy of the Lord in that day." And many said, "Lord, grant it." And I said, "Amen."

So far we proceeded without interruption. But as I was giving out, "Alas! how soon the body dies!" &c., up came the parson and lawyer in such a spirit, as if death, judgment, heaven, hell, and the sufferings of Christ, had never been with them matters of any consideration. They broke through every enclosure; decency itself must not be left out of the question. The parson seized my arm and said, "I insist upon you being off. Begone about your business."

*Preacher.* I hope sir, you will not disturb our religious devotions.

*Parson.* I will not allow it. Be off about your business.

*Prea.* What harm are we doing, sir, we have been singing the praises of God, and praying, and I have been preaching; now we are going to sing and pray again, and then go away.

*Lawyer.* Make him leave off, sir. Where is his license?

*Par.* Where is your license? Produce your license.

*Prea.* Are you a magistrate, sir?

*Par.* No, but my father is.

*Law.* You are not a licensed preacher; if you are, show your license.

*Par.* Come down, you stupid fellow.

*Law.* Make him leave off, a villain.

*Prea.* I am neither a villain nor stupid; but I love all your souls and I will pray for you all.

*Par.* (with my arm in his hand). If you leave off and go away, no one shall hurt you; but if you pray, I will charge the constable with you.

*Prea.* I must and will "commend them to God and to the word of His grace," unless you will pray, and you have as much right as I have. As he would not, I did; and all the time I was praying, the constable was shaking me, and saying, "Leave off." But I got such hold of the Lord, that neither parson, constable, nor Satan, could not break my hold; and the people said, "It is astonishing!" Ah! they could not see that invisible hand which upheld me. I concluded, and thanked the people for their good behaviour, and began to exhort the parson and lawyer to behave better for the future, for I thought all was over. But to my surprise, the parson said to the constable, "Take him away."

*Constable.* You are my prisoner, sir.

*Prea.* Well, that's a bad job; but I can't help it now. The constable took me by the arm and led me through the street to a public house. The whole village was raised, for I helped to raise it by singing as we went through the street, "Wicked men I'm not to fear," &c. I was introduced into the parlour. Many people rushed in, but the constable ordered them all out.



*Con.* I am very sorry for you, but if you will let me pass you out of the parish, all will be well.

*Prea.* That would be no credit to the people whose preacher I am. Under what Act have you taken me up?

*Con.* The parson told me to take you up, and the lawyer said he was right.



HIGHGATE CHAPEL, KING'S LYNN.

*Prea.* If your parson knows no more about the Gospel, than your lawyer does about the law, it is time for us, as a people, to come to Litcham.

*Con.* You had better go, sir.

*Prea.* I am your prisoner, and you must take care of me.

I began to talk to the man about his soul; but someone knocked at the door, and the constable went out. When he came in again he said it was Mr. H—, the parson, and he wishes you to go away; and I am to carry you where you would wish to go.

*Prea.* I am your prisoner; and wish to remain under your care till I am set at liberty by a magistrate.—He went to the door, and I heard him say, "Sir, he will not go away."

The lawyer came into the room and said, "My good fellow, you had better be off about your business. You will find yourself wrong in the morning."

*Prea.* You called me a villain in the street, and a stupid fool; now you call me a good fellow; but I have no business with you; besides you swear, and to that I have an objection. You will do well to leave our company. He went away, saying, "We will do your business in the morning." He and his two sons came in again to persuade me to go. But I would not. The lawyer then said, "You shall go to prison in the morning."

*Prea.* I hope not, sir, but you ought to know law.—He went away not very comfortable.

In came D. B. and brought me something to eat, and the constable charged him with me; gave my friend the staff, and said he would fetch the handcuffs; but I stated there was no need of them. "And you may depend on it, Mr. Constable, I will not run away." So he left us.

The landlady came into the parlour, and I said I was going to pray. She called in two more members of the family, and we engaged in prayer, and the old lady has no objection to prayer to this day.

In the morning I and my friend went out into the street, and we were soon invited to take breakfast with a pious family. But the constable came and took charge of me, and said I must go with him to Letcham Hall, to Colonel R—. Away we went. I had to wait in the servant's hall a long time before I was called for. The parson and the colonel were together while I was preaching away to the servants.

Being called for, I went into the magistrate's room with the constable, and said to the magistrate and parson, "Good morning gentlemen."

*Magistrate.* What fellow have you got there?

*Con.* A Methodist preacher, sir.

*Magis.* What is your name?

*Prea.* W. Bellham, sir.

*Magis.* Where do you come from?

*Prea.* Lynn, sir.

*Magis.* What have you been doing?

*Prea.* Telling the inhabitants of Litcham, Jesus died to save them, and He died for you, sir, and I am thankful to God for an opportunity afforded to tell you you may be saved now, through Jesus Christ.

*Magis.* Stop, stop; Mr. H—, our clergyman here, could have told the inhabitants of Litcham that, without you troubling yourself.

*Prea.* It's no trouble, sir, I take a pleasure in doing it.

*Magis.* Well, well, what is to be done?

*Prea.* What Act am I taken up under?

*Magis.* The Vagrant Act; you are a common vagrant.

*Prea.* I did not do anything to obtain money.

*Magis.* I meant the Riot Act; you collected a great number of persons together, I suppose, to make a riot, as it was late in the evening.

*Prea.* If I am taken up under the Riot Act, I have no business here; commit me to prison, and let me take my trial before more than one magistrate.

*Magis.* — you. Be off out of my sight.

*Prea.* It is wrong to swear, sir. Jesus Christ hath said, Swear not at all; and I hope you will endeavour to settle this business without swearing.

*Magis.* Then don't provoke me.

*Prea.* I have no desire to provoke you, sir; I speak in the spirit of meekness. You know I have done no man any wrong, and if I have I am in your hands, and I hope you will do the thing that is right.

*Magis.* You have done the thing which is wrong, in preaching without your license.

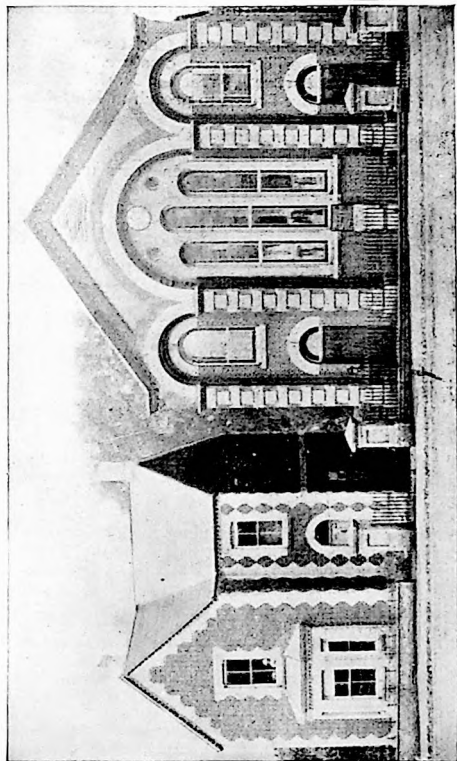
*Prea.* I am a licensed preacher, but have not my license with me.

*Magis.* Who granted you a license;

*Prea.* Squire Woodhouse, justice of the peace, at Osten, in Lincolnshire.

*Magis.* Do you know Squire Woodhouse?

*Prea.* Yes, sir, I have taken breakfast with him and his lady several times, and prayed with them, and he with me; and we have had some



THE CHAPEL AND MANSE, DOWNHAM MARKET.

precious seasons together; and I have heard him in his kitchen exhort sinners to repentance. He is wise and pious, and a blessing to his neighbours.

*Magis.* Well, well, but if you got your license in Lincolnshire, you must go and preach in Lincolnshire.

*Prea.* Yes, sir, and anywhere else. God save the king.

*Par.* I have a license, sir, but I cannot preach in any parish but my own, without leave of the minister of that parish.

*Magis.* Certainly not. And you must go and preach in Lincolnshire.

*Prea.* Yes, sir, and anywhere else. Jesus Christ says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

*Magis.* I will grant you a license to preach in Norfolk.

*Prea.* I thank you, sir, I have license to preach in Norfolk.

*Magis.* Go about your business.

*Prea.* When I am properly discharged, sir.

*Magis.* Are you any trade?

*Prea.* I am a shipwright. I served seven years under Mr. B. of Lynn.

*Magis.* You are a fine fellow: a shipwright, a parson, and a lawyer. Well you may go about your business; I have no more to say to you.

*Prea.* Good morning, gentlemen.

*Magis.* Good morning. Where are you going now?

*Prea.* To Castleacre to preach, and then to Westacre, and then to Lynn, sir.

*Magis.* I hope you will not come to Litcham any more; if you do, we must send you to the tread-mill.

*Prea.* We shall come again, sir, not to offend any, but to do good in God's name.

*Magis.* You may go.

*Par.* Stop, sir, there is something for him to pay. Constable, what is it?

*Con.* Eight and ninepence, sir.

*Par.* Eight and ninepence. You will discharge that bill, and then you are at liberty.

*Prea.* I am at liberty, sir: the magistrate has set me at liberty.

*Magis.* Let the fellow go.

*Par.* But who is to pay the eight and ninepence?

*Magis.* Pay it yourself; bringing your fellows here.

*Prea.* I'll pay it if it's just and right. But I think the debt belongs to Mr. H.

*Magis.* Be off.

*Prea.* Good morning, gentleman.

The parson came out when I did, and I said, "May God forgive you, sir, I wish you well." But he would not speak.

It was a trial to be seized by the constable, and led through the street, and then to be brought to a magistrate, and be gazed upon and laughed at, &c.

But there is nothing like sticking to a good cause, for whoever goes to Litcham will see a Primitive Methodist Chapel, a large congregation, and a Christian society. I really did think that the parson and the enemy of souls would be too much for us; but time has proved God was with us, and He will help us. O, the good that has been done in that place through the instrumentality of our dear people."

From Litcham, in after years, the three brothers, John, James, and Mark Warnes, entered the ministry. John, however, through illness was soon compelled to resign the work. Mark compiled a popular selection of hymns, entitled "Lively Hymns for Lively People."



REV. JAMES WARNES.



REV. MARK WARNES.

The first District Meeting of the Norwich District was held at Fakenham in 1826, and in the arrangements made by that circuit for the Services at the District Meeting, we find it was decided that a missionary meeting be held, that Bro. Atterby preach a missionary sermon, and that a missionary meeting be held at Wells on the Friday after the District Meeting. Here are the first indications of that spirit of missionary enterprise, which was destined to figure largely in connection with East Anglian Primitive Methodism in after years. Although this District Meeting was entertained by the Fakenham friends, the delegates were somewhat lacking in reciprocating the kindness shown, for they decided, contrary to the circuit's wishes, to appoint to the circuit one minister short of the desired number. This led to an adjourned quarterly meeting being called after

the District Meeting, and an appeal was sent to the Conference against the action of the District Meeting, but with what results we cannot say.

In 1828 it appears that the Rev. W. G. Bellham was stationed on Fakenham Circuit, and, as at Lynn, he soon encouraged the people to build a chapel to worship in. At the November Quarterly Meeting of that year it was resolved, "That Bro. Bellham beg for Fakenham Chapel for six months," also, "That William Kirby be taken out to travel in Bro. Bellham's place." Here is the entry of the Rev. William Kirby into the Primitive Methodist ministry, which he adorned for a long term of years on the various circuits of East Anglia. The building of the chapel was evidently proceeded with at once, as at the following quarterly meeting there was a record made of the fact that it was built; in December, 1830, it was recorded that a minister's house had also been built adjoining the chapel. This house was the birth-place of the late Rev. M. S. Cushing, who although deprived by physical infirmity from serving in the active ranks of the ministry for a number of years, yet in his earlier ministerial life, and again in later years, having recovered from his affliction, he did noble work on several of our circuits. Prosperity attended the efforts of this circuit, from which at intervals, Norwich, North Walsham, Mattishall, (afterwards East Dereham), Briston, Aylsham, and Holt and Sheringham Circuits were formed. From the minutes it appears that Hugh Bourne was present at the March Quarterly Meeting in 1826, and, characteristic of his accustomed generosity, "gave a donation of 12/- towards paying Bro. Lord's expenses." What this referred to is not recorded.

We noted the formation of Upwell Circuit in a previous chapter. The district meeting was held there in 1829.

Brandon (afterwards Watton) was made into a circuit in 1828, and it is probable, as Mr. Petty seems to suggest, that it was reached by the first missionaries to Norfolk. Little is known of its early history, but this circuit figured largely in the history of the Norwich District between 1830 and 1842. On its early plans are found Thetford (missioned in 1828 or 1829), Bury St. Edmund's (missioned in 1829 by Revs. G. Appleby and G. Tetley), Diss, and Rockland, with the places adjacent to them, and which are now four separate circuits. These,

with the Watton and Brandon and Methwold Circuits, embrace a tract of country about thirty miles across in any direction, and which was at one time the area covered by the original Brandon Circuit.

The years 1829 and 1830 found the Cambridge Circuit impoverished financially, so much so, that it was one of the four circuits in the Connexion, which received help from the first year's income of "The Charitable Fund" in 1830. This fund was practically the commencement of that system of financial help which has been rendered to the weaker circuits of the Connexion in increasing measure from that year onwards,



REV. S. ATTERBY.



REV. J. GARNER.



REV. G. TETLEY.

and which has been developed to what we now know as "The Sustentation Fund." In the year referred to the income of the fund was £27 13s. 5½d., which amount was expended in paying part of the deficiencies in the ministers' salaries on the Cambridge, Norwich, Retford, and Whitby Circuits. The grants to needy stations were, evidently, not large ones in those days.

The year 1830 was also eventful as marking the beginning of the labours of the Rev. Robert Key on the Mattishall Branch, now, as East Dereham Circuit, in the Norwich District. Through Mr. Key's labours, it influenced considerably the extension of Primitive Methodism in places near thereto, and now on the Lynn and Cambridge District.

We have, thus, six circuits—Fakenham, Lynn, Cambridge, Upwell, Brandon, and Mattishall—at work in the district at

the close of the year 1830. The five years succeeding 1825 have been years of enterprise and extension on the part of these primary circuits. Camp meetings, out-door preaching services, street missioning, cottage prayer meetings and services, have been used to carry the news of salvation into the very haunts of wickedness and sin, and from among the most depraved of men, amidst the most godless and corrupt surroundings, many have been "plucked as brands from the burning," and in their turn have gone forth amongst their fellows as living witnesses of the power of Christ to save to the uttermost, and as shining lights in dark places, have been the means of the salvation of others.

What these early "Pioneers" had to contend with is aptly illustrated, in addition to what has been recorded in the previous pages, by the following culled from the "Centenary Souvenir of Swaffham Circuit":\*

"The Camp Meetings at Castleacre were held on the common, where vile and dissolute men would circle around a plentiful supply of beer quite close to the preaching stand, indulging in coarse jests, ribald songs, and brutal sports. The roughs of the village on such occasions oftentimes met those of Swaffham, both parties determined to gain a victory by hard blows, while mud and stones were thrown at the preachers, but to-day no open-air audience is better behaved than at Castleacre."

"Weasenham was long noted for its annual wake called "Poole's Mart," which was a scene of vanity and vice; but, true to the traditions of early Methodism, the members agreed to meet and procession to the fair to sing, pray, and preach. This they did, and though persecution raged against them, they pressed through it, and gained a glorious victory."

"When a Mr. Coe entered the village of Bradenham, being expected, the baser sort were prepared to greet him with "Here comes the 'Meetin'er,'" and circling round the preacher as he walked, some raised the dust, by the use of boughs, "to choke him," others threw rotten potatoes and addled eggs, while the beating of old tins and boilers, with the blowing of harvest

\* "A Centenary Souvenir of Swaffham Circuit," by Rev. J. Prouton.



horns by the infuriated roughs produced a veritable bedlam. Still, on went the missionary singing—

The Gospel's sent to save you,  
The King is now at hand;  
Repent and be converted,  
And join our happy band.

Reaching the High Green, it was impossible to conduct any services as the persecutors behaved more like demons than men. Taking pity on the missionary, a man by name, John Etheridge, allowed him to enter his garden, where no one could reach him, and lent him a wheelbarrow for a pulpit from which he proclaimed the Truth as it is in Jesus, and some at least were pricked in the heart."



REV. R. HOWCHIN.

In an appreciation of the Rev. John Gibbon Wright is the following:—"In the Swaffham Circuit, at a place called Bradenham, there was a recreation ground. Every Sunday afternoon this place was thronged with villagers, who came for amusement. Many cricket matches were played on the Lord's Day, and the



REV. W. WAINWRIGHT.

cries of the sellers of shell fish and sweets, mingled with the hoarse shouts of the "barrackers." Pained in his inmost soul at this desecration, and impressed with the duty of warning the people of sin and punishment, the young preacher boldly took his stand one Sunday afternoon in the midst of the Sabbath breakers, and preached righteousness to them. He was assailed with rotten eggs and blasphemy, and when they failed to intimidate him or to drown his powerful voice, they tried to drive him from the ground, but were not successful. One hearer received the Word, and, convicted of sin, ran home with his basket of sweets. The cricketers, who had sufficient conscience left to be ashamed of their conduct, drew their stumps, and left the ground to the preacher and the

mob. That night the faithful servant of Christ held a Gospel meeting in a cottage close by, and a number of Sabbath breakers were converted. The work prospered to such an extent that, a few months later, a small chapel was erected within sight of the very place where this brave stand had been taken."

"Must these founders stand alone?  
Is their noble courage gone?  
Is their mantle fallen on none?  
Are such men no more?

"No the work shall yet prevail!  
Strong in souls that will not quail;  
Sons, arise! you must not fail,  
In the trying hour."



## CHAPTER IV.

**Circuit Enterprise and Extension.**

IN the "Centenary Memorial" brochure,—\* "What Hath God Wrought,?" the writer says, "The outstanding feature of our history during the 'Thirties is the progress that was being made in *East Anglia* and over the wide area embraced by the Brinkworth District. 'The Brinkworth and *East Anglian Movement*' is quite as interesting a study as the Oxford Movement, and had results in its way no less important, Whatever might be doing elsewhere—and there was a good deal worth noting,—we may be sure that in the regions named, Primitive Methodism was on the aggressive and steadily making its way against great odds."

In the year 1831, Lynn Circuit was visited with a gracious revival. This took place during the stirring and successful ministry of the Rev. John Smith (1), who had that year come from his native Tunstall District in exchange for Thomas Batty. At the Quarterly Meeting held March 19th, 1832, an increase of 234 in the membership of the circuit was reported, and the officials were stimulated to enter again into the work of extending the borders of the circuit.

Mr. James Pole was appointed to this work, and he was to labour in the North-Western portion of the county of Norfolk. He entered Docking on April 11th, 1832, and preached the Gospel by the village well. Mr. Pole says of this first service, † "The people ran to see and hear, and I preached to a large congregation. The Word was with power. I then asked for a house to hold a prayer meeting in, and one was lent us. During prayer, the unction of the Holy One was poured

\* "What Hath God Wrought,?" by H. B. Kendall, B.A. Published by E. Dalton, 48-50, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.

† "Gospel Victories," compiled by Thomas Church.

out." Continuing the account of these missionary labours in the book just previously quoted from, Mr. Pole says,—

"Thursday, April 12. I proceeded to Burnham market, about six miles, and preached in the open air. When I commenced singing, the people were surprised to see me act thus, and though many flocked round me, it was in such a careless manner, that I proceeded with difficulty. However, looking to the strong for strength, God defended me, the mockers were silenced, and a spirit of hearing rested upon the people ere I concluded. I then walked six miles to obtain a lodging. Once on the way, I feared I should not succeed, but lodge under a hedge, which would not have been the first time. However, the Lord opened my way.

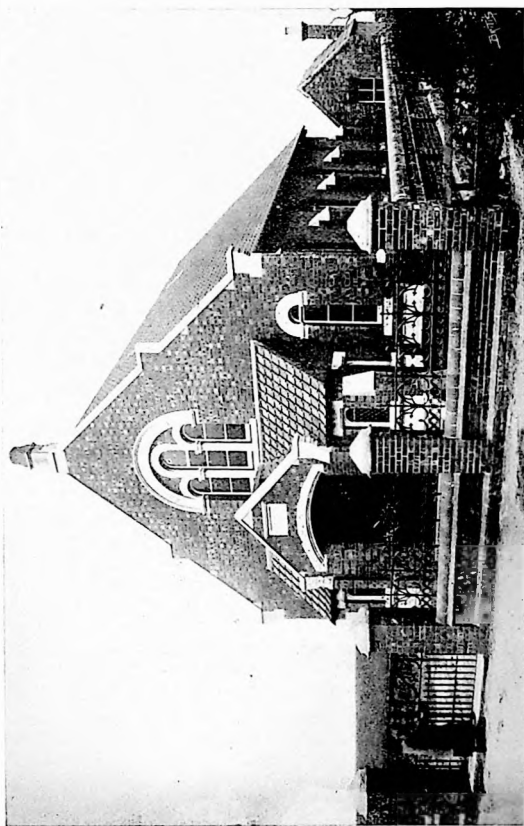
"Tuesday, April 17. I preached at Ringstead, and God worked powerfully. Many stout-hearted sinners trembled. After the service, I enquired for some house to preach in, and for lodgings. A man present, replied, "You may go and *lodge with my dogs* if you will." This did me no harm, for it promoted a spirit of compassion among the people. Another man, with tears in his eyes, invited me to his house, and provided me with lodgings, free of expense.

"After Monday, April 23, I proceeded to Snettisham. At this place I had never preached, and while on the way Satan tempted me much *not* to go. It was powerfully suggested to my mind, that no person would pay any regard to me or to my preaching. Notwithstanding, I proceeded, and stood on the steps of the cross, a large congregation assembled, and if ever I preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, it was on this occasion. Every person appeared moved, and several invited me to their houses. I asked for a house to preach in, and the way opened at once. Since that time, a society has been formed of sixty members, a chapel fitted up to hold two hundred persons, and all this has been accomplished in about three months! To God be the praise!

"Monday, June 18. Attended the Lynn Quarterly Meeting. I have been missionary about ten weeks, preached about 100 times, and joined 120 members in society. I have generally preached about four times on Sundays, and six times on week days."

In connection with Mr. Pole's work at Docking, Mr. R. Sporne (who afterwards became a valuable member of our society), when a lad of fifteen years, was offered by his employer two shillings and sixpence, if he would gather up all the rotten eggs on the farm for the purpose of pelting the missionary.

Mr. Pole also preached at Thornham, during this missionary tour, in the month of April. He took his stand under the trees off Frog Market Street, and afterwards he continued to come every fortnight. He was invited to take dinner at the house



PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL, HEACHAM.

of Mr. Durrant, who was a member of the Wesleyan Methodist society, as was also his wife. This Mr. Durrant was the father of Billy Durrant, who became very notorious and

successful in winning souls in East Anglia. The son urged his father to ask Mr. Pole to go home with them to dinner. The family was very poor, through the affliction of Mr. Darrant. The son at this time had met with an accident, and he had his dinner sent him daily by his employer. There were nine of them, father and mother, six children, and Mr. Pole, to dine off half-a-pound of mutton, a loaf of bread, and some potatoes. They all sat round the big old table. Mrs. Darrant carved the half-pound of mutton. She first cut full half of it, and put on Mr. Pole's plate, none on her own, nor yet on her husband's, but all the children had a *small* piece. When she had finished carving, Mr. Pole asked a blessing on the food. He gave a look at the little ones, his eyes filled with tears, and he cut his piece of meat into seven pieces, putting one piece on each child's plate, and keeping one piece for himself, saying, "We will all share alike." This act made a deep impression on Billy's mind and heart. He said, "How I loved him for it, I felt as if I could go through fire and water for him."

On May 30th, Mr. Pole held a love-feast in the house of Mr. John Andrew, at Thornham. There were present, J. Frost and J. Fuller (parish constable). The power of God filled the house. G. Green and John Jewell were crying for mercy, Bartholomew Barber was in great agony of spirit, and William Crown, who afterwards became a travelling preacher, was by his side. It was in this house and at this service that Billy Darrant was converted. This meeting was a powerful one, and did not end until twenty minutes to one in the morning. Some of the worst characters were saved about this period. Mr. John Fuller of Holme, told the people of the good work of grace at Thornham, and he said, "Among the rest, that abominable fellow Howard is converted." Speaking of Bro. Howard on one occasion, the Rev. J. Scott said, "I have spent many hours in the hospitable home of J. Howard, and heard him recount stories of his youth. Thornham, Holme, and Hunstanton, being situated on the sea by the Wash, they were noted places for smuggling, and James Howard was one of a gang of desperadoes."

Will Chambers was another typical character. He used to marshal the young men of Dersingham to cricket on the Sunday, and he was very much annoyed when the people went singing on the common, because his companions would leave



REV. JOHN SCULPHER. *Born at Castleacre, 1817; Died at Lynn, 1889.*

him and run after them. "Let them go after their business, and let us go after ours," he would say; then he would ask, "What have we to do with them"; but he heard the 'glad sound,' and afterwards became 'valiant for the truth.'

At a camp meeting on the green at Thornham, whilst a Mr. Pentney was preaching, a woman by the name of Elizabeth Grice, who kept the Chequer's public house in the village, came to the camp meeting, bringing with her a **large bottle of beer**, which she intended to sell

at the meeting on the Sabbath morning. There were a number of persecutors present, but the course taken by this woman, strange to say, did not 'take on.' One of them asked her for half-a-pint, and, while she was busy uncorking the bottle, somebody from among them threw a stone, which hit the bottle near the bottom and broke it, the beer being spilled all over her silk dress.

A memorable camp meeting was held at Ingoldisthorpe, on May 27th, 1832—the first in that part of the country. The immortal John Smith had the lead of it. Mr. Pole and other lay helpers were present to assist. It was indeed a day of power and blessing. Before the meeting broke up in the afternoon, twenty men and women had found peace. Great sinners fell down as if they had been struck with a hammer.



\* One of the 'grand old men' of Docking Circuit. \* MR. JOHN TIPPLE.

The name of Billy Durrant appeared on the plan as a local preacher of Lynn Circuit at the September quarterly meeting, 1832. He was abundant in labours, and assisted Mr. Pole much in his mission work. They had a favourable reception in Docking from the first. They secured a blacksmith's shoeing shop, which was small and very cold in winter, rain and snow drifting in among the people, but they continued to meet in it, and many people were saved there. Afterwards they removed to a waggon lodge, which was fitted up for preaching for more than a year.

Billy Durrant and James Pole were men of strong character and indomitable will. No journey was too long, no weather too rough,—rain, hail, snow, and blow made no difference. On one occasion, to save an unusual long journey, they spent the night in a wood. Sometimes they would walk thirty miles to keep their appointments.

Billy Durrant describes a journey to Heacham. He says, "I shall never forget going to Heacham in the winter of 1837, in a snowstorm. It began to snow in the forenoon, and by twelve o'clock there were three to four inches of snow. My wife said, 'Stay at home, they will never expect you in such weather.' I replied, 'I must go,' and go I did. When I got as far as Ringstead, the wind began to blow in puffs, increasing in strength till it quite roared, and blew a mighty gale. The snow began to fill the road, and before I got to Heacham it was more than knee-deep. I went to the chapel and preached. As the weather, after the service, was worse rather than better, I entreated the friends to let me go home. Having got a cup of tea, I started at once. When I got to the Long Drove at a quarter past four, it was quite full as high as the hedges, so I had to get into the fields, but when there it was very little better. The wind so blew the snow in my face, that I had to turn round many times to get my breath. Sometimes I sank in the snow up to my knees, and stuck fast; at other times I stumbled and fell; indeed, I thought I should certainly be lost in the snow. I did not reach Ringstead till a quarter to seven, having been two hours and a half in going something under three miles. I got to Thornham at ten minutes past nine; it had taken me nearly five hours to go six miles. I went to Mr. J. Howard's for my wife, and when I got there, I was quite numb with cold. Such a figure I looked, for my breast





REV. J. KEMISH.

joined him in making a disturbance. Billy Durrant cautioned the disturbers to be careful, for God's eye was upon them. He said, "Some of you may be dead before next Sunday." Old Mr. Hendry was taken ill that night, and died on the following Tuesday.

Mr. Pole was a mighty man of God, an excellent singer, and powerful in prayer. His missionary labours were crowned with glorious success, so much so, that in the year 1836 Snettisham became the head of a new circuit, afterwards to be called Docking Circuit.

was full of ice and snow, my clothes seemed like a sheet of ice, icicles hung from my hair and whiskers, and I was completely exhausted. When I think of this, I cannot but feel that if the Lord had not given me strength at the time, I should have perished in the snow."

The village of Brancaster Staithe was a hard place. The people were ignorant and wicked, and they annoyed and persecuted the 'heralds of the Cross.' Billy Durrant was preaching there in the summer of 1837, when an old man, by the name of Hendry, came among them. He was drunk, and made a great uproar, pushing the people about; others



THE ORIGINAL CHAPEL AT MANEA,  
AS AFTERWARDS ENLARGED.]

Whilst James Pole was engaged in missionary work in North-West Norfolk, James Garner had gone into the South-Western part of the county, and penetrated into Marshland, where a large measure of success attended his labours.

Early in the 'thirties Upwell Circuit missioned Downham Market, a place first missioned but afterwards given up by Lynn. The indefatigable and successful Samuel Atterby was the superintendent of the Upwell Circuit at the time of this re-missioning of Downham Market. A cottage was first used in this town for the services, and afterwards, in 1834, a barn was fitted up.

In 1832, under the ministry of the Rev. S. Atterby, there were signs of awakening at Manea, where during the preceding years the society had seriously decreased. In 1834, a great revival broke out under the preaching of Sister Pelch. Many were saved and added to the church. Through the generosity and energy of Samuel Bradford land was procured, a trust was formed, and a small chapel erected. It was opened in 1835, by the Rev. John Wood, of Whittlesea, and Mrs. Hardwick. At the time of its erection, this chapel was pronounced by the Rev. Samuel Atterby to be the most beautiful chapel in the Isle of Ely. A picture of this building is given on the preceding page.

The year 1832 is also notable for the missionary labours of the Rev. Robert Key at Watton and the villages around. Mr. Key was, at this time, stationed on the Mattishall Circuit. In \**"The Gospel among the Masses,"* written by Mr. Key, he gives the following account of the missioning of some of these places:

"I entered Saham Toney, as a missionary, on June 10th, 1832. On my way to the place I entered a field, and under a hedge I wrestled with Him 'Who is mighty to save,' that success might crown my enterprise, and felt a powerful persuasion in my own mind that great good would that night be effected, although I had never before seen the place that I was going to claim for my Lord and Master.

"The day was beautifully fine; the sun was shining in his splendour. I entered the place big with expectation, full of confidence in the promise of Him who said, 'Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world'; with you, to give efficiency to my word, to make it

\* *"The Gospel among the Masses,"* or a Selection of Remarkable Scenes, Incidents, and Facts connected with the Missionary Work and Experience of the Rev. Robert Key, and written by himself.



REV. R. KEY.

quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. I soon found a spot on which to stand, and commenced singing. Numbers flocked around me to hear 'this strange man'; but before I could announce my text, unexpectedly it commenced, as we say, pouring of rain. The congregation began to disperse in all directions. My confidence and expectations were most fearfully assaulted by the enemy. I was thrown into a severe mental conflict; but grasping my shield afresh, I shouted out, at the top of my voice, 'I hope some person will be kind enough to let us into a house, or barn, or any other place that will give us shelter from the storm.'

"One man cried out, 'You may have my house, if you please, sir.' This was the old workhouse, and would, perhaps, hold nearly two hundred persons. The greater part of the congregation and the preacher entered, and the house was soon filled to overflowing. I commenced speaking immediately, but all appeared as hard as marble, and as dark as Egyptian night, without the least religious feeling or spiritual power. After speaking as well as I could for about twenty minutes, the cloud of dense darkness began to part, and rays of divine light shot through the parted cloud. At the same time, a deep religious feeling seized the minds of many, and in a few minutes several fell to the floor; while others, as angry as demons, rushed out of the house as if it had been on fire, and its flames ready to seize upon them. I ceased preaching, made an opening in the middle of the room, and invited those that felt their need of mercy to come in. One man immediately entered, but how he got in I cannot say; he appeared to come in head foremost, over the shoulders of those who were upon their knees. He was partly in the pool, and the waters were already troubled when he came forward. I said to him, 'How long do you think it will be before you are saved?'

"He replied, 'Not long.'

"I said, 'You will not be a minute;' and in an instant he was made unspeakably happy.

"I then looked round, and seeing a great part of the congregation in tears, immediately set this new-born soul to work praying with another who was in deep distress, for we had by this time a ring full of seekers. Several were set at liberty; but as I had no efficient help, I soon became entirely exhausted. Never did I feel before the worth of a few good, skilful labourers, who knew how to lead a penitent straight to the Cross. If I had had but a few of that class with me, I have no doubt that a great part of the congregation would have been saved that night.

"This mighty shaking among the dry bones greatly displeased a class of men who professed religion. Some of these would-be wise men said



REV. R. EAGLEN.

'it was a blasphemy to tell the people that God was ready to save them then and there.'

"I preached again the following Sunday morning in a barn kindly lent for the purpose. The congregation was very large, and many were deeply affected. After preaching, I got down from the stand, made a large opening or ring, and invited all to come in who felt their need of a Saviour; and after a short but severe conflict several found peace.

"This was the second discourse that I had delivered in the place; and, as many persons had found the Lord, I formed a society, when twenty-three gave in their names. But there were a great many more who were seeking mercy; in fact a great part of the inhabitants appeared to be under a religious awakening and concern about their souls' salvation. The work from the first went on, and soon became very mighty. All the following winter, sometimes ten, fifteen, twenty souls professed to obtain mercy after a Sunday's toils; so that the society soon rose to nearly one hundred members. Some of the worst characters of the place were brought to a knowledge of the truth, and several soon began to exhort, and become useful local preachers.

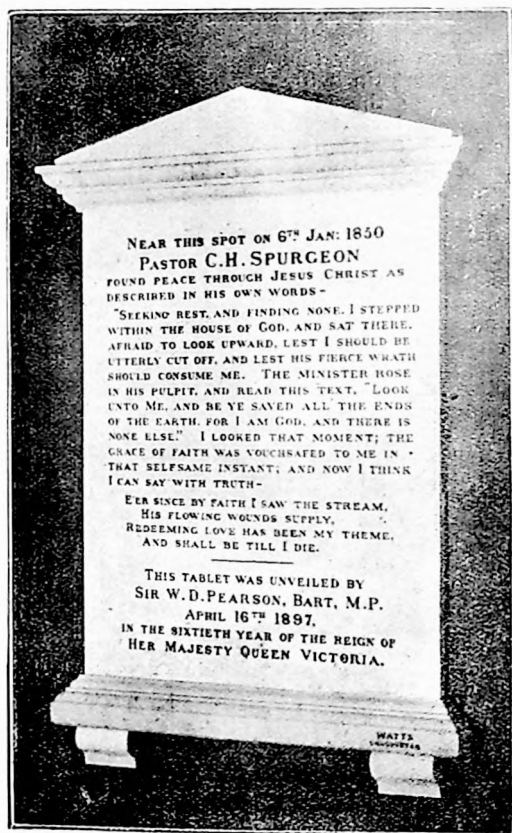
"A man, who had kept a beer house, pulled down his sign, rolled his barrels out of the cellar, and became a pious, useful member, and local preacher. The following summer, a Connexional chapel was built. This place has maintained its ground, with a few fluctuations, from the first. It became the head of a circuit, called the Saham and Watton circuit. But it had not sufficient strength, nor was there room enough to enlarge its borders so as to make it a good station; it was therefore attached (with the exception of Shipdham) to the Brandon circuit."

Commenting on Mr. Key's first service at Saham in the Centenary Memorial, "What Hath God Wrought!" the Rev. H. B. Kendall says, "Robert Key's remarkable conflict of soul while preaching at Saham Toney in 1832 throws us back for an explanation on the views of Crawfoot and H. Bourne as to the nature of spiritual conflicts. The heavy oppressive cloud which seemed to enshroud Key while he spoke, deadening all feeling and depressing all his powers except faith in God—that cloud at last broke, and under the manifest power of God sinners were forced either to yield or rush from the room. On that night a distinct link was forged in the providential chain of events which led up to the conversion of C. H. Spurgeon in 1850. One of the night's converts was a young woman whose changed exemplary life led her brother to Christ. That brother was Robert Eaglen, who in Colchester P.M. chapel was the honoured instrument in pointing Spurgeon to the Lamb of God. Our fathers verily believed and acted under the belief,

that to them it was given, by means of prayer and faith, to wield the mightiest of spiritual forces; that

'God's hands are bound or open are,  
As Moses or Elijah prays.'

Referring to his entry into Watton, Mr. Key says, in the book previously quoted from—



THE SPURGEON MEMORIAL TABLET  
IN COLCHESTER  
PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL.

"Several ineffectual attempts had been made, at different times, to introduce Methodism into the town. A gentleman, residing at Watton, informed me that 'a Wesleyan minister, a few years previously, took his stand in the town, for the purpose of warning its inhabitants to flee from the wrath to come, but was so brutally handled by the mob, that he only escaped with life, as it were by the skin of his teeth.' Our people from the Brandon circuit (which then included the Rockland circuit) had also made one or two attempts to establish a cause in the town, but failed.

"I took my stand in the market-place, August 16th, 1832, and received very rough handling from the infuriated rabble; but, being made of rather tough material, I was not to be driven out by force, nor frightened out of the field by brutality & violence,

"The following account, taken from one of the Bury papers, will give the reader a faint and partial view of the scenes which took place on that memorable night:—

'WATTON, August 16th, 1832.—This place was thrown into a state of unusual excitement by the following circumstance. One of the Primitive Methodists, or, as they are generally called, ranters, took his stand in the market-place, for the purpose of giving the people a sermon. Singing and prayer were suffered to pass off quietly. The preacher took his text from Genesis vii. 1, and while proceeding with his discourse, the assembly collected together, began to show symptoms of disapprobation, and such an uproar followed, produced by blowing of horns, ringing of bells, beating tin kettles, &c., &c., accompanied by such shoutings and yellings of the people, as quite precluded the possibility of the preacher (though of very powerful lungs) from being heard. This clamour continued, and the utmost confusion prevailed during the whole time of the sermon. The preacher was twice thrown down from his stand to the ground, but with unabated zeal as oft resumed his labours. During these proceedings several cans of beer were distributed, in order to stimulate the zeal of the misguided assailants. Common report says, that this attack on the ranter was directed by one or two of the principal persons in town, and that they had also a Church of England parson for prompter, acting behind the scene. How far this may be correct tends not to determine; the parties so charged can easily set selves right with the public, *if* the report be groundless. But I leave it to every candid reader to make his own comment on these statements, and shall content myself, for the present, with offering a word of advice to both parties—the opposers and the opposed. To the former I would recommend less clamour, and to the latter more prudence. To the ranter I would direct his most serious attention to the apostolic injunction contained in 1 Cor. xiv. 40: "Let all things be done decently and in order." To his opposers, I would recommend the sage advice of Gamaliel, recorded in Acts v. 38, 39: "And now I say unto you refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel, or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply, ye be found even to fight against God." If these counsels are attended to in future by both parties, my neighbours will not have their heads made to ache, the town will not again be disgraced by a scene of tumult and disorder, nor will further observations on the subject be necessary.—*From a Spectator.*

"My readers will I doubt not, be very anxious to know how these scenes terminated, and what were the results. For myself, I never felt before or since, as I did on that glorious night; the fear of man, the fear of suffering, the fear of death, and the fear of hell were entirely taken away. I preached when on my feet and when knocked down, when I could be heard and when I could not, under a deep impression that God would make the people feel, if I could not make them hear. In the midst of the strife and confusion a large missile was thrown at my head, which I think must have proved fatal had I not

suddenly stooped—as it was, it but just passed over me, grazing the top of my head : many who were looking on thought, and said, that I must certainly lose my life, which I felt both ready and willing to do, for Christ's and the Gospel's sake. But in the time of extremity God graciously interposed on my behalf ; three or four of the ringleaders much the worse for drink, suddenly coming over on my side, seized me by the collar of my coat and exclaimed, deeply affected, ' You are right, sir, and we are wrong, and no man shall touch you.' I was then marched through the mob by the side of my companions (who were very active in warding off the rabble) as happy as a prince, singing,

' Wicked men I'm not to fear,  
' Though they persecute me here,' &c.

" Persecution, that night, spent its force, and never rallied again to any great extent.

" A retired tradesman by the name of Took, living upon his property, who received good a few nights before at Saham, but has, long since, gone to his rest, first opened his kitchen for worship, and then built us a small chapel in the centre of the town, which he afterwards sold to the Connexion. A good cause was established, which continues to this day : several travelling preachers have been raised up in this town, and some very excellent local preachers."

We notice, also, in connection with the year 1832, that at the District Meeting, in that year at Lynn, Hugh Bourne was present. He had previously visited the district in 1828, when he was present at the District Meeting at Cambridge that year. Some extracts from his " Journal " are given in Welford's " Life of Bourne," as follows :—



STOWMARKET CHAPEL.

(The original Chapel built in 1836, still in use.)

" Thursday, March 29th, 1832.—Set off at five in the morning in a sailing packet (from Boston) and arrived at Lynn between two and three in the afternoon. All well. In the evening I was at a powerful prayer

meeting. Friday, 30th: Preached in the Chapel at Lynn. Saturday, 31st: I and brothers Salter and Thompson visited and prayed with a number of families; afterwards I went to East Winch. Sunday, April 1st: Early prayer meeting, and after some time the class met. They are doing well. At half-past ten I spoke. I then went to Marham, and spoke in the afternoon and evening; large congregations, and powerful times. Monday, 2nd: Visited and prayed with about 20 families along with brother Thompson. In the evening we held a missionary meeting, and it was very powerful. Tuesday, 3rd: This, I believe, is my birthday. I am now 60 years of age. At 10 o'clock we held a service in the Chapel. Most of the Sunday School children and teachers were present. We had preaching and addresses to the children, a course of praying followed; the power of God came down—30 children were weeping at once, but after our hour's praying, some of them got liberty, and some of the teachers pressed into the fullness of sanctification. In the evening we held a missionary meeting at Swaffham; a great company and a powerful time, and during the praying one was sanctified wholly. Truly this has been a great day. Wednesday, 4th: I and brother Sharman visited and prayed with a number of families. Our company then set off for Castleacre, where we held a missionary meeting. The Chapel was more than filled; it was a powerful time, and in the praying three or four were set at liberty. Thursday, 5th: We came to Rudham. The missionary meeting was in a large barn, more than a mile distant. About 400 people and a powerful time. Friday, 6th: We walked 15 miles to Lynn, and in the evening W. G. Bellham preached."

On Saturday, 7th, the District meeting was opened, and by night the business was nearly completed. It was reported that the District had of late improved rapidly, the increase for the year being 1,020. On Sunday everybody put in a full day from six o'clock in the morning. On Monday, 9th, the District meeting business was concluded. Mr. Bourne remarks: "This has been the best District Meeting I ever attended. To God be the praise!" Another day was spent in devising plans of usefulness, conversing on the mystery of faith, the temptations, trials, and works of the labourers, and the conversion of souls; and in the afternoon he left Lynn Circuit for Upwell.

An increase of 1,020 members for the year indicates the success that had attended the efforts at extension made by the various circuits. Whilst not immediately connected with the history of the Lynn and Cambridge District, yet we must not omit recording that for seven years—1828 to 1834—London stood on the stations of the old Norwich District. In 1833 the District Meeting was held in London, and John



Smith (1) and Robert Key walked all the way from Norfolk to London for it. During the District Meeting week, whilst addressing a missionary meeting in Blue Gate Fields Chapel, Robert Key brought down his fist with such emphasis on the



WATTON CHAPEL.

table as to split it in two, and Hugh Bourne picked up the scattered candles. Norwich District gave to London, James Garner (1), John Oscroft, and Richard Howchin, whilst in its turn it received from London, W. Wainwright (1) and George Tetley. The latter was a notable figure in this district, and became President of Conference in 1855.

May like successes to those recorded in this chapter come to us in these Centenary years.

" Father, let Thy kingdom come—  
Let it come with living power;  
Speak at length the final word,  
Usher in the triumph hour.

" As it came in days of old.  
In the deepest hearts of men,  
When thy martyrs died for Thee.  
Let it come, O God, again,"

## CHAPTER V.

**Circuit Enterprise and Extension—Continued.**

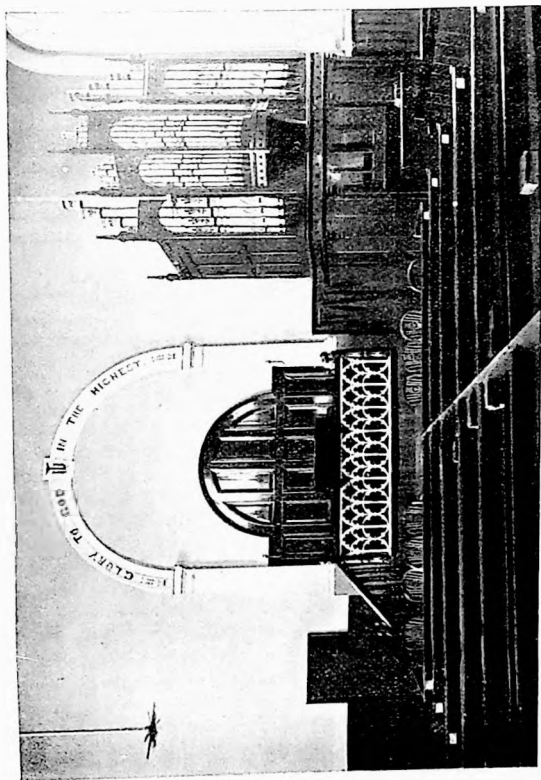
**A**T the Conference of 1833 the membership of Lynn Circuit was reported as 1,170, an increase of 843 for the preceding five years. About the year 1835 Lynn sent the Rev. W. Kirby to mission Peterborough, which in 1839 became Peterborough Circuit.

In 1836, a notable event at Lynn was the holding of the first of the two conferences which have been held in the town. Hugh Bourne and William Clowes were present at the conference. In Garner's "Life of Clowes," it is recorded that,

"On May 14th, 1836, Mr. Clowes started for the Conference, which in that year was held at Lynn, Norfolk. The religious services of the Conference were peculiarly imposing and impressive. We have reason to believe that out-door preaching and processioning are specially hateful to the devil and his agents, whether they be of earth or hell; and, hence, we suppose, hostility in manifold forms is brought to bear upon them. When the Conference assembled at Lynn, a policeman intimated to Mr. Clowes that the town authorities would probably not allow processioning through the streets. Mr. Clowes respectfully replied, 'Wherever we hold a Conference, we have a procession, and we fully intend to pursue our usual course, leaving the event with the Lord.' The procession was held, and the townspeople were astonished at the good order and vigour with which the movements were conducted; and the concourse which accompanied the procession to the camp ground was immensely great."

The camp meeting was on Hardwick Green, and was said to have been one of the largest gatherings of its kind ever held. In waggons, carts, gigs, and other conveyances, as well as on horseback, people had come from places ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty miles distant. Early morning services at the Conference were held at five o'clock. We do not meet quite so early for service now at either conferences or district meetings.

Wisbech, first a part and then a branch of the Upwell Circuit, became independent in 1833. In connection with the



INTERIOR OF THETFORD CHAPEL.

early history of this circuit, Mr. James Kerridge, who probably knows as much about it as anyone now living, says, "The spiritual condition of the inhabitants of this district was deplorable. At

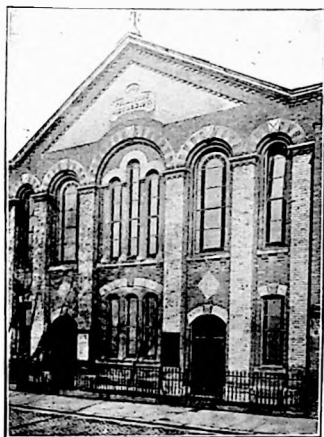
Walpole, where the missionaries first opened their mission, drunkenness, dog-fighting, and sabbath-breaking were rife; the general life was like the miserable condition of the country, which in wide areas was filled up to a great extent with bog, fen, and stagnant waters, causing ague, fever, and other diseases. Through the energy and courage of the inhabitants, bog, fen, and waste lands have been reclaimed, and what was comparatively a desolate region, is now literally a fruitful garden. This is a pleasing illustration of what has been accomplished through the self-sacrificing labours of men, who, prompted by a burning love for souls, entered into conflict with the powers of sin and death, rescued the perishing, cared for the dying, and thus won hundreds of trophies to the Cross. The people who sat in darkness saw a great light.

"One of the most zealous pioneers of the good work was Martin Turnpenny, of Sutton, whose canonicals were evidenced in a long outer garment known as a long slop, and who, mounted on his donkey, carried the Gospel message from place to place, singing at his services the well-known "Christ, He sits on Zion's Hill," "Hark! listen to the Trumpeters," "Turn to the Lord," &c. Many farm labourers also entered into the work, and after toiling during the week at almost starvation wages, on the Sabbath travelled from East to West and from North to South, preaching deliverance to the captives and the opening of eyes to the blind, returning home at late hours on Sunday nights, foot-sore and weary, to resume their life of toil in the early hours of Monday. Others, brothers and sisters of the middle class, also went heartily into this glorious mission, whose names are as ointment poured forth, including Brother and Sister Taylor, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Miller,—the latter with a child in her arms sometimes walking to Holbeach, sixteen miles distant,—this boy afterwards himself became a local preacher,—Brothers Waller, Johnson, Mounseer, Gubbins, Flint, Whitton, Starbuck, Walker, and others, of pious memory."

The Rev. H. B. Kendall, in the Connexional History, says—"A notable acquisition to the Society (Wisbech) was Edwin Waller, a Wesleyan local preacher, who, after mature deliberation, in which he counted all costs, united with the Society,

and continued to be his staunch friend and supporter until his death, in 1854. This Edwin Waller, 'earthenware dealer,' of Wisbech, was evidently a notable figure in the Norwich District in his day. He was for long the corresponding member of its District Committee, often its chosen representative to the Annual Conference; and in other ways he played an influential part. He was, we are told—and we can well believe it—a man of extensive reading, of close thought, and

great originality. Being a man in easy, if not affluent circumstances, he was able to render material help to the struggling societies. He became responsible for the rent of the better preaching room which was now taken, and he willingly incurred the responsibility of trusteeship for Connexional buildings. In addition to this, by his prudent counsels and his abundant labours as a local preacher, he greatly assisted in the development of the Wisbech Circuit, and of Holbeach, which was a branch of Wisbech until 1855. The Circuit took its part in missionary efforts in Huntingdonshire and at Ramsey, though the shifting relations of these missions to Wisbech,



WISBECH CHAPEL.

Upwell, and other circuits is too intricate a matter to be unravelled here."

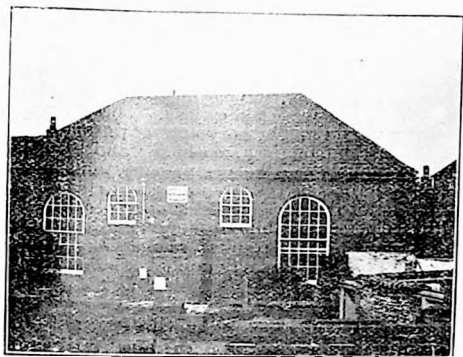
The 'Seaman's Chapel,' on the Nene Parade, was purchased in 1835, and the society worshipped there till 1845, when Providence Chapel was purchased. "That was indeed," says Mr. Kerridge, "a time of rejoicing, a day of great things. This became the centre of great spiritual activity; souls were saved and a flourishing Sunday School established." In 1860 the present commodious chapel in Church Terrace, as shown above, was erected.

Leaving our review of Wisbech Circuit at this stage, we notice that in 1833 Brandon Circuit parted with Rockland and the adjacent places, with a membership of 472. In that year, prior to the division of the circuit, Brandon reported 660 members; and in 1840, through the labours in turn of Messrs. Bellham, Moss, Knock, Winkfield, and their colleagues, the membership had risen to 954. Thus, allowing for the 472 given to Rockland Circuit, there had been in the ~~seven~~ years, an increase of 766. Quoting again from the ~~Connexional~~ history, we are told, that, "This numerical increase was the more remarkable, as, during the earlier part of the septennate, persecution had been bitter and the poverty of the people extreme. At Thelnetham, Rushford, and Bridgham (places in the area of the present Thetford Circuit, but at which there are no Primitive Methodist causes now), the societies were deprived of their preaching place. At Tottington (a village in the area of Watton Circuit, but like those previously mentioned, so far as regards Primitive Methodism) Mr. and Mrs. Cheston, the latter the mother of the Rev. Robert Church, were turned out of house and home, and their goods left on the open green for three days and nights, because they 'harboured the Ranters.' Ultimately they found shelter at Thompson, two miles away; and as they opened their house for preaching, their settlement there was the means of strengthening the village society. It was in the face of difficulties such as these that the Brandon Circuit extended itself."

In 1834 Stowmarket was missioned by the newly-made Rockland Circuit. The Society first met in an old salt warehouse, which was the scene of many spiritual triumphs. In 1835 Stowmarket became the head of a separate circuit, with the Rev. James Lear as its first superintendent.

The villages around were missioned, but much difficulty was experienced in establishing societies. The financial poverty of the people reclaimed in those hard days of the agricultural labourer hindered the building of chapels; so many of the fruits of those early days are found in the Congregational and Baptist Churches which abound in the county. The Stowmarket Chapel (see page 51) was built in 1836, and heroic must have been the efforts of the faithful few to shoulder such a heavy burden. Its financial troubles were so great ten years later, that it was closed for a time, and

it was seriously proposed to sell the property and retire from



FAKENHAM CHAPEL.

the neighbourhood. Wiser counsels, however, prevailed, and in 1849, the Rev. John Phillips was stationed there. During his four years ministry he renovated and reopened the chapel and reduced its debt to a workable figure.

While Brandon Circuit was forging ahead in the work of mis-

sioning other towns and villages, the history of Cambridge Circuit, as previously stated, has been lost to view, unless,

quoting once more from the Connexional History, "The curtain is unexpectedly lifted by the biographer of the

Rev. Chas. Simeon, the famous evangelical leader.

There was, he tells us, in Cambridge,

'A certain enthusiastic Nonconformist labourer, named John Stittle';

MR. JOHN READ, of Cambridge, Deed Poll Member, 1896-7-8.



MR. DANIEL DUNNETT, of Watton, Deed Poll Member, 1897-8.

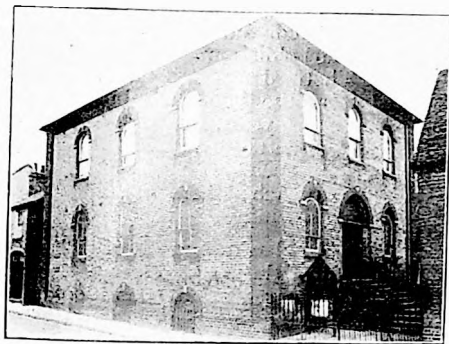
\* "Recollections of the Conversational Parties of the Rev. Charles Simeon, etc.," by A. W. Black, M.A.

a kind of well-meaning, self-constituted city missionary in the viler parts of Cambridge, and called by the undergraduates a 'Ranter.' He used to hold his meetings in a room, and when the attendance grew too large for one room, he threw down the partitions and used the whole floor of the house: and again enlarged his improvised chapel by taking in also the upper storey, cutting out the central part of the bedroom floor, but leaving enough to make a wide gallery all round, upheld by pillars. As he was but a day labourer, it was understood that Mr. Simeon aided him in the expense of these alterations. "This man and his services were the butt of many a thoughtless young gentleman, who used to stand outside and look in at his chapel window and listen for amusement's sake, and whose annoyances he yet patiently and kindly bore. On some occasion of bitterness he is said to have invited a railing youth to his house to partake of the 'herby-pie' supper provided for himself and family, and then persuaded him to stay and join in his simple, but hearty family worship, which resulted in the young man's beginning to think seriously on religion, and ultimately becoming a valuable clergyman."

The Rev. H. B. Kendall continues, "In this extract, the 'self-constituted city missionary' had given him the same reproachful name our fathers bore; nor, indeed, do we know of any other denomination, besides our own, that before 1836—the year of Simeon's death—would have made room for John Stuttle and his methods. We have not the least objection to acknowledge him as one of ourselves, especially as the sermon given as a specimen of his preaching would do no discredit to any Cambridge pulpit.

"In the course of years, circuits, like soldiers on a long march, are apt to drop out of the ranks. So it was with Cambridge for a short time. In 1842 it ranks as the eighteenth circuit in the Norwich District, whereas it began, in 1825, as the third. The explanation is, that for three years—1834-1836 inclusive—it disappeared from the list of stations, but came on again in 1837. The plan of 1842 shows six places, which include Waterbeach, St. Ives, and Huntingdon. St. Peter's Street Chapel had recently been acquired, and by 1855 the progress of the circuit was such that a second chapel was secured in the eastern part of the town. This was Fitzroy Street Chapel, the first which the Wesleyans had possessed in Cambridge, and had now vacated. This building was secured on generous terms, and opened by Miss M. C. Buck, the most popular female preacher in this period of our history."





ST. PETER'S STREET CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE.

The year 1836 saw the formation of Swaffham Circuit, the town and adjacent villages being detached from Lynn Circuit, which also gave up the places it had missioned in the North-west corner of Norfolk, to be formed into the new Snettisham Circuit, in after years called Docking Circuit.

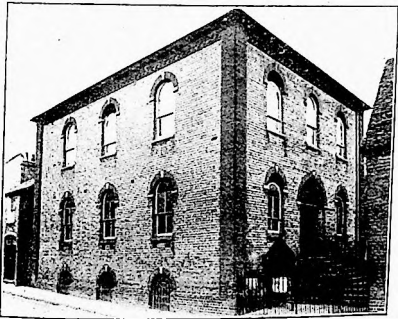
In this same year Thetford was missioned a second time, the first efforts of the missionaries being unsuccessful in establishing a society. The only account now available of those first efforts, is that a few friends used to gather for service in a cottage at the top of Magdalen Street. Later, Mr. Geo. Wharton, a good specimen of the old English yeoman, who lived at North Lopham, purchased some property in Guildhall Street, and turned it into a meeting house. This must have been about 1830 to 1833. After a time the cause was broken up, and the preaching room turned into two cottages.



THE TABERNACLE, CAMBRIDGE.



THE TABERNACLE, CAMBRIDGE.



ST. PETER'S STREET CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE.

Early in 1836, John Kent came and preached in St. Nicholas Street. He was arrested, but liberated, and the same evening he preached at Garboldisham. In the Brandon Circuit book for this year Thetford appears on the March list of places, it is omitted from the June list, but appears again in the September one. Two years later a small chapel was built in a garden behind a cottage on Melford Bridge Common, and the next year the society reported fifty-seven in membership. Hugh Bourne preached here in the 'forties; there are some who remember his coming.

In 1851 Thetford became the head of a branch of Brandon Circuit, and the following June the Rev. George Tetley became superintendent. The accomodation was soon insufficient, and a gallery was erected. Seven years later the front of the chapel and the back of the cottage was pulled down, the side walls joined, and made one building. The Rev. John Phillips preached re-opening services, taking for his text, "And all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof, for the people had a mind to work." The good work went forward, and it became clear to those outside the chapel that more room was yet wanted. Eventually additional ground was secured, and the building enlarged. Soon after this a grand work broke out. The members went out night after night alternately missioning and visiting, with the result that in three or four months the membership was doubled.

Amongst the village causes on the present Thetford Circuit, there are three which call for a passing reference. Hockham in 1839 reported fifty-five members in society, and was the strongest country society on the then Brandon Circuit. In 1862 the society here established a day school. This progressive spirit characterises the life of the village to-day in various ways. At Shropham, Hugh Bourne preached on one occasion, and the present society steward, Mr. John Sayer, remembers the visit. Mr. Bourne stayed for the night at a farm between Shropham and Hockham, his host being Mr. Joshua Finch. Barnham has a history, especially with regard to the site for the present chapel. Meeting first in a cottage, the accomodation soon became too limited for the growing society. A wooden house on wheels was built and placed in a garden. It was known as the "Tabernacle." Later, owing to objection by the owner of the soil, it was sold. The society



MR. B. REDHEAD,  
Ten Mile Bank.



MRS. FISHER,  
Exmore.



MR. W. GODDARD,  
Outwell.



MR. J. KERRIDGE,  
Wisbech.



MR. G. W. MILLER,  
Wisbech.



MR. R. HEIGHT,  
Wisbech.



MR. W. S. PROCTOR,  
Downham Market.



MR. W. LEWIS,  
Bardolph Fen.



MR. W. H. ROSE,  
Ten Mile Bank.

then tried to get a piece of land, but the owner refused to sell. They, therefore, gave themselves to prayer, and asked that all hindrances might be *removed*. The burden of their prayers is very suggestive. The prayers were answered. The owner of the soil gave them the piece of land, but stipulated, as a condition of their acceptance of it, that no mortgage was to be held on the building. The task seemed impossible, but with heroic faith the society grappled with it, and succeeded in raising the entire cost.

We venture to turn aside here from the actual history of the Lynn and Cambridge District to notice the labours of Mr. John Bunn in and around Newmarket, and his imprisonment in Bury jail, as the societies established by him in that locality gave rise to others in places now on adjacent circuits in this district. Concerning his work in those places he says,—\*

"July 1, 1837. I arrived at Newmarket. All hell seemed to be let loose upon me. I passed some time seated under an old hedge by the race-course before I made enquiry about a home. I sat musing and weeping. Fain would I have sung; but the response of a weeping heart is, 'How can I sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'

"Sunday, July 2. Preached morning and evening at Newmarket in a small cottage, to a small congregation. In the afternoon at Saxon Street, in a small cottage occupied by high antinomians.

"Newmarket is chiefly supported by horse-racing and other carnal sports, which tend to sink the inhabitants to the lowest ebb of human depravity.

"July 4. Preached at Saxon Street. I have now been round the mission, and am sorry to say, that though this mission has cost a deal of money, and the preachers have suffered much during nearly three years, yet there are but three places, and about thirty members, and not one local preacher; and the prospect of establishing a cause in these parts is dark and cheerless. O, what a land of cruelty and crime is this!

"Monday, July 10. Preached at Chevely. This village appears to be mainly under the influence of the clergyman, who is a magistrate, a farmer, and a great friend to the spirit of the country. The bells rang all the time I was preaching.

"Sunday, Oct. 8. Left Newmarket early to re-mission Mildenhall. I was severely tempted not to go; but retreat I dare not. In the forenoon I attended a chapel. At half-past four I preached in the market-place; the people were just coming out of the church, hundreds flocked to hear, and I addressed a large and peaceable congregation.

"May 3. Preached at West Row in the evening, and told them I should preach there again on Sunday morning.

\* "Gospel Victories or Missionary Anecdotes of Imprisonments, Labours, and Persecutions, endured by Primitive Methodist Preachers, between the years 1812 and 1844," compiled by Thomas Church.

"At nine in the morning of the Sunday I had spoken of I was at the post of duty. Some timid professors told me they thought I had better not go, as something serious would be the result. I said, in the name of the Almighty I would go, if I died. The persecuting party had got a gallows erected close by the spot; I faced them and the instrument of death. I felt a great weight of Heaven, and knew I was fit for the society of the Firstborn. I gave out hymn 16, S.B. The rebels came up. I sung, 'Now, poor sinner, look to Him who died for thee.' The persecutors stood as if thunderstruck. I preached to a peaceable congregation, after which, the persecutors peaceably dispersed, and some friend took the gallows down. Praise the Lord, He is my support, and on His power I rely.

"At night, preached in Mildenhall market-place to a large congregation. The persecutors shouted and threw rotten eggs. The persecution at this place gets awful, and those who ought to restrain such work seem to be the encouragers.

"May 25. The constable of the parish of Mildenhall brought me a summons to attend a bench of justices, to answer to a charge made by a constable for obstructing the highway. But, the truth is, there was no obstruction, and, in the name of heaven, I determined to see it out.

"Friday, June 1, 1838. I had to meet the magistrates. Brothers Wainwright, Lucas, Winkfield, and Wonfor, having been assisting to hold missionary meetings on the mission, accompanied me and heard the trial. My brethren were aware I had violated no law; and, when I made my defence, the magistrates seemed struck, and looked at each other. They, however, committed me to Bury jail for ten days. At that moment I felt a great opening with the Lord. My soul was ready to burst forth in shouts of praise to be counted worthy to be in bonds for Christ's sake. After partaking of a little refreshment with my brethren in the ministry and other friends, who were bathed in tears, the gig came up with two constables. Hundreds stood in the market-place to see me seat myself between the two constables, and, the people said it was a shame to treat me so. I shouted when I ascended the gig, and sung, 'Wicked men I'm not to fear.' My brethren and friends sung a little, but were soon bathed in tears. I left the town singing. In the evening I arrived at the jail, and was received by the key turner, who looked earnestly at me and gravely said, 'Sir, I am astonished that they should send such a man as you here, and that for preaching.'

"I was conducted to a lonely cell, which had but little light. It had an iron bedstead, with an old sack full of straw to lie on. Well, thought I, my Master had not where to lay His head. I awoke in the night, and felt the glory of the Lord was there; and I could sing, 'Lo! God is here!'

"Next morning I was taken before one of the officers, was asked a number of questions, and was ordered to take off my shoes and wearing apparel. After doing this, a part was returned to me; but my watch, money, writings, and great coat I was not allowed to have. I was conducted to a cold and dreary cell, with a small loaf of bread and a portion of water. I felt this the time of trial; hell assailed me, but I waited on the Lord, and the cloud burst.

"Each day I was allowed about an hour to walk in the yard, besides about twenty minutes each morning. I met several prisoners, one of

whom said, 'Sir, they sent you here for trying to do good, and me for doing harm.'

"On Saturday morning, June 10, 1838, I was set at liberty, and how sweet was the sight of the streets and the people. I spent a part of the day with the Bury friends, who had been very kind to me; about six in the evening I arrived at Mildenhall.

"Sunday, June 11. Was rather unwell. In the evening I addressed three or four hundred attentive hearers in Mildenhall market-place. Our enemies blushed while they heard me tell all about the jail, and what it cost to get me there, and that I intended to go forward. From that time the opposition began gradually to subside. But, lamentable to say, we lost thirty members through the raging blast of persecution: while some who have stood, have sustained temporal losses. But God will reward his faithful ones.

In the year 1838 Upwell Circuit sent Messrs. Redhead and Jackson to open up a new tract of country, but without any precise instructions as to where they were to go. At the end of a long day's journey, however, they found themselves at Saffron Walden, in Essex, forty miles away, where good work was done, and a strong circuit formed. In 1842, as also indicating the missionary enterprise of some of the older circuits, we find that Fakenham Circuit missioned Oundle in Northamptonshire.

Between the years 1835 and 1842, Soham, afterwards called Ely Circuit, and in more recent years divided into Ely and Soham Circuits, had been formed. How this became originally a circuit we cannot say. It is, however, quite probable that the labours of Mr. Bunn in the Newmarket District had something to do with its origin. Soham itself was missioned by the Rev. Robert Key while he travelled on Rockland Circuit the first time. In 1842 Bury St. Edmund's Circuit was granted independency from Brandon Circuit. This same year Soham Circuit made an attempt to mission Ely, but it proved for the time abortive.

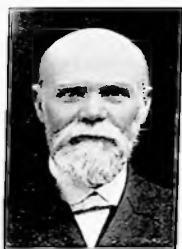
In 1842 there were nineteen circuits in the Norwich District, and amongst these, the following, now on the Lynn and Cambridge District, had come into existence:—Fakenham, Lynn, Cambridge, Upwell, Brandon, Wisbech, Stowmarket, Swaffham, Docking, Soham, and Bury St. Edmund's. Commenting on the successes realised in the district between the years just mentioned, Rev. H. B. Kendall says, in the *Connexional History*, "Figures furnish but imperfect evidence. From the very nature of the case a very large percentage of the direct,



no less than the indirect results accomplished, must have fallen to the share of churches which seemed to have a strong hereditary claim, and had more to offer. Often enough they carried off the full stock to their well-filled granary, and left us only the gleanings of our own harvest. The words of Christ were reversed. We laboured and others entered into our labours. Especially was this the case in Suffolk and Essex, where the Congregational and Baptist Churches have deeply



REV. A. T. WARDLE.



REV. A. W. EDWARDS.



REV. H. BENNETT.

rooted themselves. At Bury St. Edmund's, for example, Mr. Petty tells of a Nonconformist minister, who stated that he had admitted eighty persons to Church membership who attributed their enlightenment to the open-air preaching of the Primitive Methodists. This is not written by way of complaint, but simply to show that, in any estimate of the good effected by our church in the Eastern counties during this time, account must also be taken of the extent to which other churches were augmented and quickened by our labours."

"Among the saints on earth  
Let mutual love be found;  
Heirs of the same inheritance,  
With the same blessings crowned!

"Thus will the church below  
Resemble that above,  
Where springs of purest pleasure rise,  
And every heart is love,"

## CHAPTER VI.

**The Period of Consolidation.**

**F**OLLOWING the year 1842, when the General Missionary Committee was formed and the various missions taken under its charge, circuits settled down very largely into the work of consolidating and conserving the causes already established. Hence, there is not visible that outward aggressive missionary enterprise which had previously been so manifest. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with recording some of the outstanding events of this period, and in so doing first present our readers with a copy of a "License to Preach." This is the one issued to the Rev. Mark Warnes:

I, Mark Warnes, in the Parish of Litcham, in the County of Norfolk, do solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a Christian and a Protestant; and as such that I believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as commonly received among Protestant Churches, do contain the revealed will of God, and that I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine and practice.

I, Mark Warnes, do sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful, and bear true allegiance to her Majesty Queen Victoria. So help me God.

I, Mark Warnes, do swear that I do from my heart abhor, detest, abjure as impious, and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position, that princes excommunicated, or deprived by the pope, or any authority of the see of Rome, may be deposed, or murdered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever; and I do declare that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or ecclesiastical, or spiritual, within this realm. So help me God.

I, Mark Warnes, do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do believe, that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation and adoration of the Virgin Mary, or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the mass, as they are now used in the church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous; and I do solemnly in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof in the plain and ordinary sense of the words, read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without evasion,

equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the pope, or any other authority, or person whatsoever, and without any hope of any such dispensation from any person, or authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am, or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof, although the pope, or any person or persons whatsoever, shall dispense with, or annul the same, or declare, that it was null or void from the beginning.

I, Frederick Walpole Keppel, one of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk, do hereby certify that Mark Warnes, of Litcham, in the County of Norfolk, Protestant Minister, did this day appear before me and did make and take and subscribe the several oaths and declarations specified in an Act of Parliament made in the reign of his Majesty King George the Third, entitled an Act to repeal certain Acts, and amend other Acts relating to religious worship and assemblies and persons teaching and preaching therein.

Witness my hand this thirteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord 1842.

F. W. KEPPEL.



MR. W. CLACK,  
Ely.



MR. G. WASHINGTON,  
Littleport.



MR. S. CROSS,  
Adelaide.

Ely, which, as we have noticed, was missioned first by Upwell Circuit and afterwards by Soham Circuit in 1842, an attempt which proved for the time abortive, was again missioned shortly afterwards by the Rev. William Yeadon, who at a farewell meeting on his leaving the circuit, gave the following account of his effort to introduce Primitive Methodism into this city:—

“When I first came into Ely, I was a perfect stranger in the place, but I determined to blow the Gospel trumpet. I took my stand on the top of Back Hill, near the great tree, and began to sing, “Turn to the Lord and seek

salvation." I then told my mission. I sung down the hill till I came to the gas house yard. A number of people gathered round to hear what I had to say; but something was being prepared for me; for when I was speaking someone from behind the wall emptied a pail full of dirty gas tar and mud and filth over the wall, with the intention of pouring it on my head, but they missed their mark, and it fell harmless a few inches on one side. A convert was on the platform at the time and said that he was one of the number that plotted the act."

Littleport and adjacent places were made a branch of Upwell Circuit in 1846, and in 1847 it became Littleport and Ely Mission. In 1851 we find it as Ely branch of Upwell Circuit, and by 1855 it had been joined to Soham, which was then called Soham and Ely Circuit. By 1857 it had become Ely Circuit.

In this same year the chapel at Ely was erected, the Rev. W. Yeadon himself, helping to cart the bricks for the building. Since then it has been improved and enlarged. On one occasion, as Mr. Yeadon was going into Ely, driving two horses with a load of bricks, he was met by the superintendent of the Ely Wesleyan Circuit, with whom he exchanged the usual courtesies. Afterwards the latter made inquiries respecting the carter's identity, and learning that it was the Primitive Methodist minister, and that he was helping to build a new chapel at Ely, said, "Good heavens! I think the time of the old prophets must be coming over again!"

In 1844 the Conference met at Lynn for the second time. Hugh Bourne came as a delegate, and twenty other ministers whose names are written large across the pages of our Connexional history; there were thirty-two lay delegates, making fifty-four in all. It was at that Conference that Hugh Bourne, then seventy-two years of age, volunteered to go to Canada as a missionary, and he went. The year's increase of members was reported to be 3,000. Many services were held during the time of Conference, but, of course, Sunday was the great day. In the Magazine for 1844 it is stated that "many thousands of people attended the camp meeting," which was held in a meadow along the Gaywood Road, just beyond the "Hob-in-the-Well." Three processions started at 8.15 a.m.



MR. DAN. HARPER,  
Helhoughton



MRS. HARPER,  
Helhoughton.



MR. R. BARNES,  
Castleacre.

in various directions, and almost everybody in Lynn that day must have heard something of the Primitive Methodists. Hugh Bourne was very fond of children, and he had four girls dressed in white to head the procession, which he led, two on either side of him. There were three preaching stands on the ground, and the report in the Magazine says:—"The Word of Life was dispensed with good effect, souls being saved on the ground." At night several love feasts were held, which in those days were powerful meetings, and during the day between thirty and forty people were converted. A party of eighty came down the river in a pleasure boat from Cambridge to the Conference, and on the return journey, amid singing and praying and earnest addresses, several were converted on the boat.



MR. J. S. MANTRIPP,  
Swaffham.



MR. R. DIXON,  
Foulton.



MR. B. CHALLIS,  
Brandon.

We noted in the previous chapter that Fakenham Circuit missioned Oundle in Northamptonshire. In 1842 we find Brigstock, in the same county, also a mission of Fakenham, continuing as such until December, 1846. At the March quarterly meeting in 1845, Fakenham Circuit reported 1,074 members. Briston with adjacent places became a branch of Fakenham Circuit in 1846.

Hugh Bourne visited Lynn in September, 1848, and went over nearly all of what was then the Norwich District, and also in 1851. From Welford's "Life of Bourne" we quote:

"Thursday, May 29th: I came to Lynn and was at Mr. Santy's. After dinner I went to the house of Mr. Langham, near the chapel. All well. Sunday, June 1st: At Lynn; we processioned with the children, and I preached to them in the open air. We came to the chapel, and I preached on 'Elijah.' Also in the afternoon we processioned, and I preached with liberty from Rev. xx., 11-15. Night, "Pentecost." I was much fatigued, but the Lord kept it off the body. To Him be glory for ever and ever!"

On the Monday he went on to Rudham school anniversary, He was then 79 years old, and on the way to the Conference at Yarmouth, the last he ever attended.

Thetford and the adjacent villages became a branch of Brandon Circuit in 1851, independency being given it in 1859.

It sometimes happens that causes, over which neither ministers nor officials have any control, hinder the prosperity of circuits and districts. For instance, in the years 1853 to 1855, many hundreds of people emigrated from Norfolk to the Colonies and America, at the time when what was called "the gold fever" raged in Australia and California; and, Primitive Methodism suffered in numbers by it. In 1853 it was reported to the Conference, that there had been a Connexional decrease of 1,051. Of that number the Norwich District alone, reported 410 decrease, 160 of these having emigrated. In the letter which the president of the Conference of that year addressed to the societies throughout the Connexion, it was stated that another cause of the decrease was: "That in some parts of the district the long continued and heavy rains which fell during the winter, produced alarming floods, laid thousands of acres under water, involved the destruction of property to a vast extent, compelled the inhabitants to escape for their lives, broke up preaching stations, scattered societies, and seriously inter-



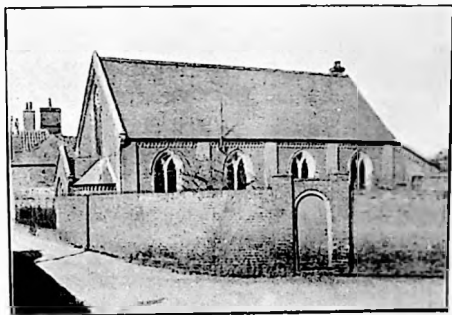
SWAFFHAM CHAPEL.

addition to the twelve deed poll members and "the four persons" appointed by the previous Conference, there were sixty delegates from the districts. The delegates from the Norwich District at the Conference were the Revs. John Winkfield (Lynn), and

rupted the wonted labours of the preachers; heavy losses were the unhappy result." The total decrease for the years 1853-4-5, was 1,665.

Wisbech Circuit parted with Holbeach Branch in 1855. In this year the first chapel at Downham Market was built, and in June, 1856, Upwell gave place to Downham Market as the head of the circuit.

In 1857, the third and last Conference to meet anywhere in the area of the present Lynn and Cambridge District met at Cambridge. This Conference was the Jubilee Conference of the Connexion's history. In



WELLS CHAPEL.

\* In 1872 the Conference met at Yarmouth and in 1892 at Norwich.

Thomas Lowe (Briston), Messrs. George T. Goodrick (Yarmouth), William Lift (Lynn), George Jones (Hadleigh), and Thomas Parker (Fakenham). The Conference plan was printed on one side of a sheet measuring 13 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches wide by 17 inches deep. This is the usual size of a circuit plan. An increase of 2,124 members was reported.

Each week-day during the Conference there was service in St. Peter's Street and Fitzroy Street chapels at 5 a.m., at which various ministerial delegates preached.

In the evening of the opening day of the Conference, Wednesday, June 3rd, a temperance meeting was held in the Fitzroy Street Chapel. The report of this in the large magazine for August says, "The meeting was highly interesting, and many seemed to appreciate the facts and arguments that were delivered."

On Thursday, June 4th, a missionary meeting was held in Hobson Street Wesleyan Chapel, and another missionary meeting was held on Tuesday, June 9th, in St. Andrew's Street Baptist Chapel.

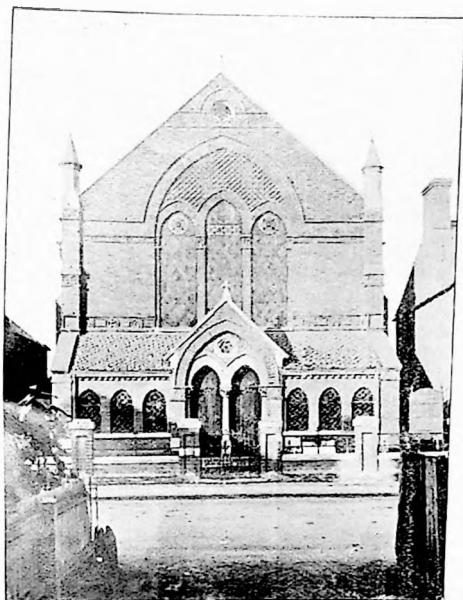
Concerning the Sunday services the magazine above referred to records,—

"The Sabbath, and the Conference camp-meeting had been long and earnestly anticipated, and at an early hour numerous parties began to flock into the town. But the weather, during the forenoon, being extremely unfavourable for open-air worship, after processioning for a time, and a short address being delivered on the market hill, the company divided and proceeded to their respective chapels, where effective services were held till noon. The weather, after dinner, having assumed a more propitious aspect, a procession started from St. Peter's Street Chapel, which gradually swelled to an immense size, and repaired to the camp-ground, Parker's Piece, where three preaching stands were occupied, and several prayer meetings were conducted with great effect. Several thousands attended these services, and for the most part paid marked attention to the various exercises; and it is believed many persons were awakened and blessed. In the evening three love-feasts were held, one in each of our two chapels, and the other in Zion (Baptist) Chapel, East Road. Great was the unction with which they were attended, and several immortal souls were brought into the liberty of the sons of God."

Commenting on the services and sessions of the Conference in the magazine report, the Rev. W. H. Meadows, who was stationed at Cambridge at the time, says,—

"When the assembly was fully convened, we felt grateful to God for His having favoured the numerous delegates with journeying mercies,





MANEA CHAPEL.

tants of the town mingled with the large audiences on the market hill and elsewhere, and evinced no small degree of surprise and seriousness whilst they listened to brethren who preached the gospel in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." Many expressed their astonishment that the Primitive Methodist Connexion should produce men of such tact, talent, and intellectual might; and the confessional services have produced an impression in this ancient university town which will not soon be forgotten.

"In conclusion, we would respectfully suggest the importance of more devotedness to the great work of soul-saving on the part of all our preachers, leaders, and members. May the year upon which

and for having brought them together in health and strength for the purpose of transacting the important business for which they were collected. We could not but observe, however, with peculiar feelings, that here and there one in the assembly bore evident marks of hard and long continued labour in the cause of soul saving, and approaching dissolution.

"The religious services, both within doors and without, were well attended, and the sermons and addresses delivered by the delegates were instructive, impressive, and useful. In many instances they were very powerful.

"Numbers of the clergy, college students, and the respectable inhabi-



MR. W. LIFT.

we have just entered excel all preceding for genuine revivals of religion in all our home and foreign stations, and large additions of saved souls be made to our numbers."

The following hymn, apparently written specially for this Jubilee Conference, was printed on the conference plan. With some alteration it might be adapted to these centenary years.

" On Mow a cloud was seen arise  
Just fifty years ago;  
And stretching now athwart the skies,  
Hangs o'er the land below.

*Chorus—*

" What numbers since that cloud arose, From sin have been set free;  
Then let us sing in joyful strains, Our glorious jubilee.

" Of heavenly rain, some fruitful showers  
From that rich cloud have fell;  
And still the Lord His Spirit pours,  
O'erwhelming sin and hell.

" Methinks I see those spirits bold,—  
That mighty praying band,  
The standard of the cross uphold,  
And throw the gospel brand.

" Poor sinners felt the burning word,  
And captives were made free;  
Anew may we our armour gird,  
On this our Jubilee.

" The spirits of our fathers, they  
Have wing'd their happy flight  
To that blest land, far, far away,  
Beyond our mortal sight.

" Their mighty spirit may we know,  
Their falling mantles see;  
While they above, and we below,  
All keep the jubilee!

" Ye men of God, with one accord,  
Come nobly round the Cross;  
And aided by the mighty Lord,  
The foe will suffer loss.

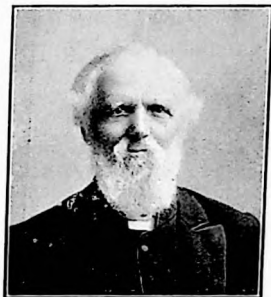
" Come, saints and sinners, all unite,—  
Resolve,—we will be free:  
Sweet liberty is now our right,  
We have a Jubilee!

" Our earth-bound souls will soon be free,  
Our armour then laid by;  
We'll sing a glorious Jubilee  
For ever in the sky."

## CHAPTER VII.

**The Period of Consolidation**—Continued.

**T**HE period now under review was a time of considerable chapel building. London Road Chapel, King's Lynn (see page 27) was built in 1859. This was during the superintendency of the Rev. Richard Howchin, who in his report to the Magazine, says "that on this site was formerly founded a hospital for poor and impotent people; but after many changes it was eventually made into a workhouse. One Sabbath morning, when most of the inmates were gone to church, the old building fell with a tremendous crash; several were seriously injured, and two lives were lost. Some time after the disaster, Richard Munson, Esq., of Walpole, bought the property of the Crown, and on May 5th, 1858, he sold half the frontage to us, being 108 feet by 60 feet, for £350." Many were the hearthburnings



REV. R. CHURCH.



REV. M. S. CUSHING.



REV. E. BLAKE.



REV. R. BETTS.

in certain quarters when it became known that the finest site in Lynn had been secured for a 'Ranters' chapel. Mr. Howchin's report goes on to say "that the utmost influence of certain gentlemen was thrown in our way, and had not our undertaking been attended to in business-like order, and legally secured, we should have lost our bargain. After the writings were made, and the building nearly ready for the roof, they offered to purchase the whole, if possible, at any price we might fix, so much did some people dislike to see a Primitive Methodist chapel in so prominent a position. The trustees, however, held their own, and the present chapel, to accomodate nearly a thousand hearers, was erected."

The clock in front of the chapel is a Primitive Methodist clock. There had been a clock for many years on the old buildings that fell down, and when the chapel was built some discussion arose about having a clock, and as the Town Council would not do it, the trustees of the chapel got up a subscription list, the clock was procured and put in, and so belongs to this chapel. When it was done the Town Council were approached about the matter, and they agreed to pay the cost of lighting it at night, and for nearly 50 years the clock has been for the benefit of the public by night as well as by day.

In 1862 Fakenham chapel was built, and 1863 witnessed the erection of the present chapels at St. Peter Street, Cambridge, Watton, Thetford, and Sudbury. Wisbech Chapel was erected in 1868, Soham Chapel in 1869, Downham Market Chapel in 1871, Swaffham Chapel in 1875, and the Tabernacle, Newmarket Road, Cambridge, in 1876.\*

Referring to the erection of the Tabernacle, at Cambridge, the Rev. G. Bell says, "It is built on the site of an old public house, called the 'Jolly Tar,' which the Trustees pulled down, and, though approached relative to transferring the license, they allowed it to lapse. It was hoped the temperance people would have helped with the erection, but no help came from them. The Messrs. Foster gave between £400 and £500 towards its erection." The Tabernacle superseded the old chapel in Fitzroy Street, in which the work had been carried on since 1857.

\* Photos of all these chapels are given on pages 59, 61, 53, 55, 51, 57, 79, 31, 73, 61, respectively.



SOHAM CHAPEL.

Continuing his account of Primitive Methodism in Cambridge, Mr. Bell says, "The part of the town where the Sturton Street Chapel is situate was missioned about 1875. The mission was commenced under an archway, nearly opposite the present site, which was purchased shortly after the mission opened. It was the first place of worship in that new part of the town. The Rev. W. Rudd, a superannuated minister, threw his whole soul into the work of this new mission, and it owed much to his constant attention and oversight."

Heacham Chapel (see page 41) was built in 1878, and Manea Chapel (see page 75) in 1884.

It must not be forgotten that many of the present chapels were in existence previous to the period we have been referring to. The oldest building now in use is the old chapel at Ten Mile Bank on Downham Market Circuit, and now used as a schoolroom; it was built in 1835. The following year, 1836, witnessed the erection of the existing chapels at Stowmarket (see page 51), Docking, Brandon, Upwell, and Hockham. Hilgay Chapel was built in 1837, and Old Newton Chapel in 1839.

MR. W. BARBER,  
Soham.

5. The consolidation of the various societies was largely helped through the building of many chapels during the period 1842 to 1891. There were 197 chapels in the district reported to the Conference of 1907, and, of these, 8 only were built prior to 1842, 158 were erected or purchased during the fifty years above referred to, and 31 since 1891. During the years 1842 to 1891 very many of the first chapels in the various places were being superseded by new ones.

We must not, however, think that chapel building was the only marked feature of the period. The purely spiritual side of the work was being regarded with equal earnestness, as will be seen by the following narratives:—

The Rev. William Yeadon, in the large magazine for May, 1846, says,—

"On January 25th, we commenced a protracted meeting at Littleport, on Ely Circuit, which was continued for twelve days, under the direction of brother E. Faux, one of our worthy local preachers, and the writer of this account. Prayer meetings were held in the people's houses, at half-past ten in the mornings, and half-past two in the afternoons, for eight days; but the attendance was so large, the heat so intense, and the kneeling room so insufficient, that we were obliged to betake ourselves to the chapel. At our evening services the congregations averaged about 300 persons at a time: to see so large a concourse, night after night, for nearly a fortnight, was truly encouraging. We had many severe contests with the powers of darkness; but the Lord graciously helped us; and at the close of the services we found that twenty-four souls had been rescued from the slavery of Satan."

The Rev. W. Peaceful said of Castleacre, on Swaffham Circuit,—

"We had determined to hold a protracted meeting, but could not execute our design till we had overcome much opposition. The powers of darkness assailed us even at every stage of the meeting, but the Lord wounded and saved souls almost every night. On the last Sunday evening we held a lovefeast in the chapel, which was well filled. The people were backward at speaking, and what was said appeared ineffectual, till about eight o'clock; then faith rose, and suddenly the snare of the enemy was broken. The meeting continued until twelve o'clock at night without any apparent order. It was believed that about twenty souls found peace with God." Amongst them was the venerable R. Barnes, who has reached the age of 85 years.\*

The Rev. J. Thurger, in the magazine for April, 1851, says,—

"We have just had another gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Soham: about forty persons have come over to the Lord's side. This is the fruit of a fortnight's protracted meetings, which commenced on

\* Mr. Barnes died February, 1908.

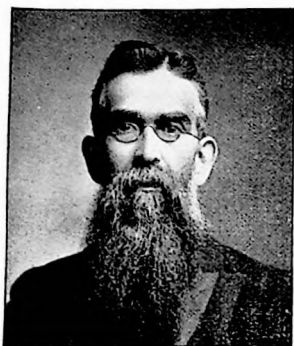


SUDBURY CHAPEL.

Monday, January 19th. I am happy to add that the good work is still progressing. Since the termination of the special meetings, two 'restless wanderers after rest' called up some of our praying host at two o'clock in the morning, being in deep distress of soul. A prayer meeting was then held till six o'clock, and one man, a Goliath, grounded his arms at the feet of Jesus. Last night two others entered into glorious liberty. Some of the above are stones hewn from nature's rough quarry, and are now squared and polished by the wise Master-builder. The great temple of millennium glory will be composed of such polished stones as these."

The Rev. W. Ward in the magazine for May, 1851, says concerning the Fakenham Circuit,—

"Our December quarter-day was held at Walsingham. The glory rested on the camp the whole day. At the close the brethren separated in raptures, and conveyed the unction to their respective societies. A revival commenced. Persons of all grades have been converted and added to the church. A space of country measuring twenty miles by twelve miles appears to be animated with the moving power of the revival. There has been an increase of one hundred and fourteen souls within the short period of three months."



REV. W. M. BATTERBEE,  
*District Committee Secretary.*

The Ministers, Revs. W. H. Meadows and the writer, with a band of men whose hearts God had touched, threw themselves into this work, and on week-day as well as Sunday seldom returned from their appointments without rejoicing over men and women having surrendered to Christ. Most of these men, and godly women not a few, are gone to the skies, among the last to be 'gathered home' was Walter Goddard, who was in labours more abundant, and had the joy of pointing scores of souls to Jesus.

"Here is a fact in connection with the revival at Exmore Drove. Four men belonging to that society,—Thomas Robb, John White, William Millburn, and George Russell, entered into a holy league and covenant to pray for certain persons till they, he, or she, as the

The Rev. George Bell writes the following :—

"In the years 1858-9 a very powerful revival was realized in Downham Market Circuit, which then included what is now Manca Circuit, and nearly every place was more or less under its holy spell; in some eighteen months nearly 600 persons professed conversion, some of whom are living Christian lives to-day. The circuit reported 200 increase to the Conference one year. Among the effects of that revival were these: A great increase in the income of the circuit, nearly 75% of which was sent to ministers who had left the circuit short of salary, which was then 10/- per week; an additional preacher was called out, in the person of the Rev. G. Seaman; a hired local preacher was also employed.



REV. C. SHREEVE,  
*Building Committee Secretary.*





REV. G. BELL,  
*Missionary Committee Secretary.*

own kitchen fell on her knees, prayed, and was saved. The effect of that conversion still lives in Downham and Manea Circuits, and the subject of it still lives (1907), while her husband, George Russell, after a fine Christian career, went home some years since."

The Rev. Robert Eaglen in the large magazine for June, 1863, says,—

"During the past few months the Most High has graciously visited Ely Station with His blessing. A particular case at Isleham may be mentioned. One of our long-tried friends together with her husband had been weeping and praying for many years for the salvation of her children, and in this blessed revival it was her happy lot to

case might be, were saved. Afterwards, as in case after case prayer was answered, the question was asked, 'Well, who shall be the next to pray for?' One of the band said, 'I was thinking of your wife, George.' A doubt was expressed as to the likelihood, but the reply was, 'We have nothing to do with the hardness of the heart, we have to do with One Who is mighty to save.' At a service conducted by the writer this person was present, and the power of God was also present to heal. She hurriedly left the service, and was just closing the door of her own house, when one of the four, who had followed her, placed his foot between the door and the threshold, preventing her closing it. On seeing who it was, she said, 'Oh, William, is it you? I will yield to Christ,' and in her



REV. J. DAVIDSON,  
*Furnishing Fund Committee Secretary.*

witness the conversion of them all—three sons and two daughters-in-law. At Burwell we held a protracted meeting which will long be remembered by many who attended it. The first three nights were seasons of darkness and hardness, but on the fourth night light flashed upon us, grace streamed in a wonderful manner, hell's legions were routed and several souls bounded into Gospel liberty. The night following six more were found with throbbing bosoms, bleeding hearts, streaming eyes, and contrite souls, panting to touch the sceptre of redemption."



MR. G. M. BRIDGES, LYNN,  
*District Furnishing Fund Treasurer.*

We might continue at considerable length accounts of such revivals as these. There is, however, no need for this, as there are many living to-day who can bear personal testimony of similar services, when there have been mighty manifestations of the presence of

God, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit has been realised in all its fullness.

Following up our account of the development of the circuits, we notice that after Thetford Circuit was formed, no other change took place in the circuits, except that Brandon gave place to Watton as the head of the circuit in 1867, until Manea Circuit was formed in 1884 from Downham Market Circuit, of which it had previously been a branch. In 1886 Soham Circuit



REV. B. BELL.



REV. R. HOLMAN,  
*Temperance Committee Secretary.*



REV. W. H. CURTIS.



REV. J. PROUTON.



REV. W. BALLS,  
*Candidates Examining Committee Sec.*



REV. L. KEMISH.



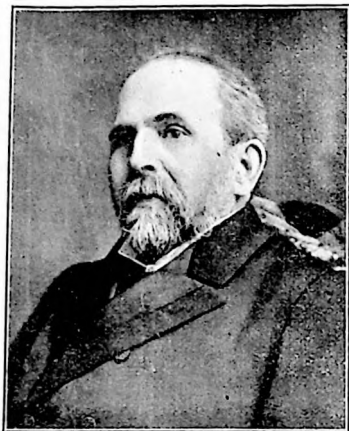
REV. C. E. CLARK,  
*Orphanage Committee Sec.*



REV. J. BOWLES,  
*C. E. Council Secretary.*



REV. A. E. ROSE,  
*Publishing Committee Sec.*



MR. J. T. JEFFERY, J.P., WISBLECH,  
Treasurer,  
*Local Preachers Training Committee.*

the clergyman, who tried to get Johnny into the stream of water which runs through the village; but by an adroit move, the preacher stepping aside, the clergyman fell in, much to the satisfaction of Oxtoby and the amusement of the people.

At Egmore, on the same circuit, the services are still held in a railway carriage. This has been the birthplace of many souls. At one time there were ten local preachers connected with this small society.

We have sketched out in the preceding chapters the history of the circuits which in 1891 were

was made from Ely Circuit, and in 1889 Wells Circuit was formed from Fakenham Circuit.

It is not clear when or by whom Wells was first missioned, but the names of such men as William Braithwaite, George Tetley, and even Hugh Bourne are associated by the old officials with the introduction of Primitive Methodism into the town. The first chapel was in 'Ranter's' Yard; this was superseded by the present building (see page 73) in 1891.

Johnny Oxtoby is said to have missioned North Creak, on Wells Circuit, being sorely opposed by



MR. S. CROUCH, J.P.,  
Manca.



MR. G. BROWN, J.P.,  
Thetford.

scattered over the area embraced in the Lynn and Cambridge District. What these "pioneers" experienced in accomplishing the work they did may be well summed up in the words of St. Paul, the indomitable "pioneer" of the Gospel to the Gentile world, as he records his own experiences in the 11th chapter of his second letter to the Corinthians.\* In the next chapter we shall notice some of the developments in the work of the new district.

"God of love, that hear'st the prayer,  
Kindly for Thy people care,  
Who on Thee alone depend:  
Love us, save us to the end.

"Let us *still* to Thee look up,  
Thee, Thy Israel's Strength and Hope;  
Nothing know, or seek, beside  
Jesus, and Him crucified."

[\* 2 Cor. xi. 26-28.

formed into the Lynn and Cambridge District, being separated from the old Norwich District. Many had been the changes and developments since John Oscroft and Thomas Charlton began their missionary labours in these places. These and other pioneers, with a long line of worthy successors, had laid the foundations of a host of strong and flourishing Primitive Methodist societies,

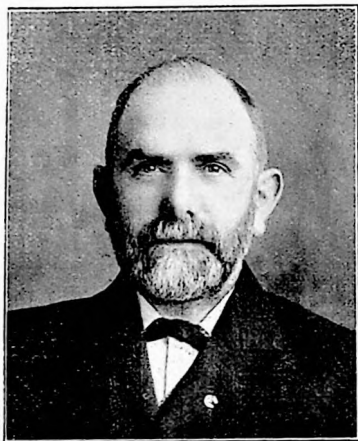


MR. W. POWELL, J.P.,  
Thetford.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**Lynn and Cambridge District.**

THE new district embraced the following circuits, the figures given after each being the number of members in each circuit when the District was formed:—Lynn 873, Cambridge I 335, Cambridge II 160, Fakenham 260, Downham 360, Watton 435, Wisbech 573, Swaffham 570, Hadleigh with West Bergholt Branch 180, Stowmarket 195, Ely 201, Bury St. Edmund's 224, Docking 545, Thetford 460, Soham 275, Manea 245, Wells 321. The total membership of the seventeen circuits was 6,212.

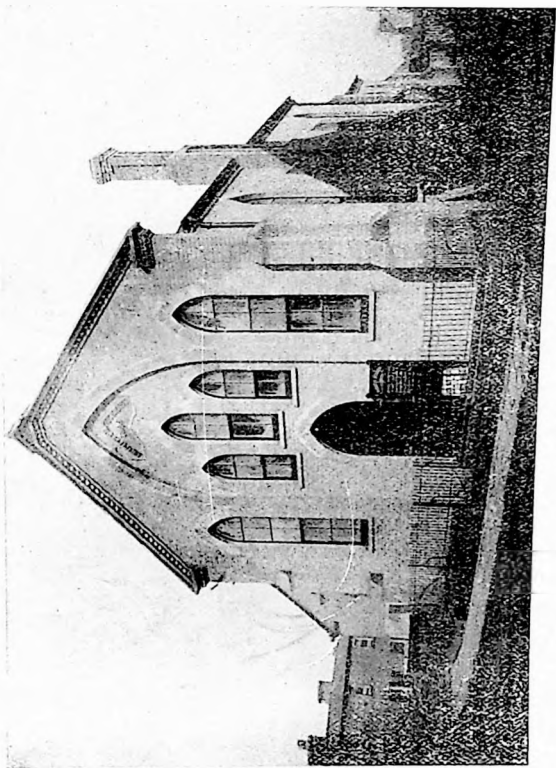


REV. I. ASHWORTH.  
*Sunday School Committee Secretary.*

In 1892 Hadleigh Circuit with West Bergholt Branch was transferred to the Norwich District, with 176 members, leaving 6,045 members in the Lynn and Cambridge District, an increase of nine for the year. Other statistics for the district in the Conference minutes for 1892, show that 185 chapels were reported, costing £55,114, with a then present debt of £16,300, and representing a present value of £62,292. The sittings provided in these chapels numbered 31,331, and the number of hearers attending the services was estimated at 22,794.

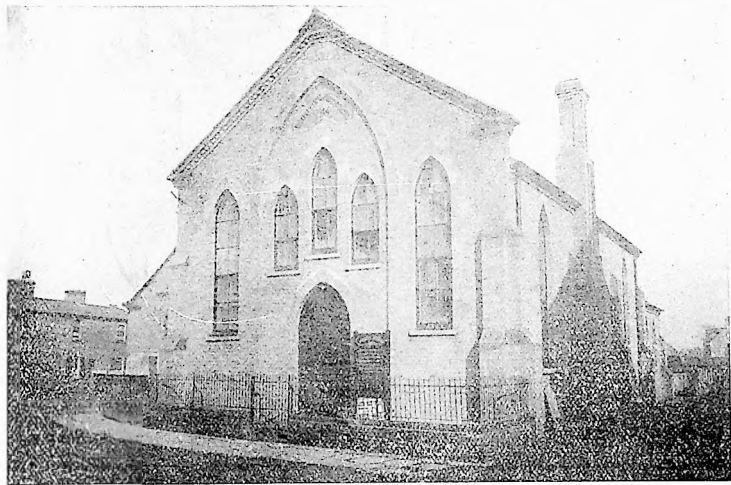
The number of circuits on the district was again raised to seventeen in 1893, owing to Sudbury being transferred from the

Missions District with 145 members, making with the 6,050 reported by the other circuits a total of 6,195.



ST. IVES CHAPEL.

In 1894 the district reported 6,131 members, a decrease of 64 for the year, and regretfully do we record the fact that the succeeding years showed continuous decreases in the membership up to the year 1901, when 5,814 members were reported.



ST. IVES CHAPEL.





BURY ST. EDMUND'S CHAPEL  
AND MINISTER'S HOUSE.

to have been the old Baptist chapel in Water Lane, and much later a move was made to a building on the quay, said to be the oldest meeting-house in Huntingdonshire, having been



REV. T. BRIGHT,  
*Equalization Fund Committee  
Secretary.*

In 1902 there were reported 5,846 members, an increase of 32. In 1903 the membership reported was 5,852, in 1904 it was 5,831, in 1905 it was 5,858, in 1906 it was 5,887.

St. Ives Circuit was transferred from the Missions District with 100 members in 1897. Its places had belonged to the Cambridge I Circuit before they were grouped into a mission. The Rev. H. B. Kendall says in the Connexional History concerning St. Ives, "Tradition, apparently trustworthy, gives 1837 as the year when Primitive Methodism entered the town. It is said to have been brought by one — Bridge and Mrs. Beel. The former is on the Cambridge plan of 1842, and, as a member of the circuit committee, was evidently a leading official.

The first building occupied is said to have been the old Baptist chapel in Water Lane, and much later a move was made to a building on the quay, said to be the oldest meeting-house in Huntingdonshire, having been used by successive bodies of Nonconformists for 200 years. This was occupied until the present new and handsome building was erected in 1896.

Brandon and Methwold Circuit with 163 members was formed from Watton Circuit in 1899, and Fincham Branch was formed in 1904 from Lynn Circuit.



MR. A. J. TURRELL,  
*Bury St. Edmund's,  
Treasurer, Equalization Fund.*



REV. W. E. WALMSLEY.



REV. S. E. MOWFORTH,  
*Secretary, Local Preachers Training  
Committee.*



REV. W. H. LAWSON, A.C.P.



REV. T. H. BARLOW.



MR. J. BURNIP, EYE,  
*Treasurer, C.E. Council.*

were 5,889 members reported for this district, the numbers for each circuit being as follows: Lynn 682, Fincham Branch 190, Cambridge I 200, Cambridge II 200, Fakenham 305, Downham 440, Watton 252, Wisbech 660, Swaffham 500, Stowmarket 115, Ely 163, Bury St. Edmund's 210, Docking 500, Thetford 395, Soham 224, Manea 250, Wells 221, Sudbury 112, St. Ives 110, Brandon and Methwold 160.

We also note for comparison with the figures

The Chapels built during the period now under review, included in addition to the one at St. Ives, Wells Chapel in 1892 (see page 73), and in 1903 the present chapel at Bury St. Edmund's (see page 90) was purchased of the Congregationalists, who had vacated it.

In 1905 the Cambridge Circuits were re-arranged with a view to better and more economical working, Sawston and Haslingfield being transferred from the first to the second circuit.

The Conference Minutes for 1907 show that there



MR. E. A. HARVEY, WATTON,  
*Treasurer, Sunday School Committee.*



MR. MARK MOORE,  
*Great Cressingham.*



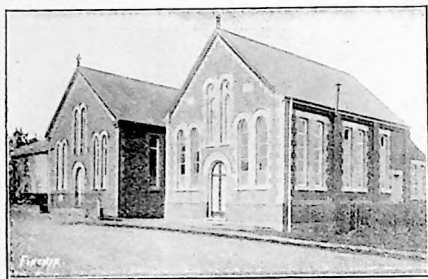
MR. JAMES WHALEBELLY,  
*Watton.*



MR. E. HARVEY,  
*Treasurer, Orphanage Committee.*



MR. C. E. TRUFITT,  
*King's Lynn.*



FINCHAM CHAPEL.

ers attending the services is estimated at 21,550. There is much to reflect upon in comparing these figures with those for 1892.

We must not omit in connection with the chapels on the district a reference to the village of Anmer on the Docking Circuit. To raise and maintain a cause in this village has been a difficult and trying work. It seemed at one time as if the cause would cease, because the inhabitants were forbidden to allow our services to be held in any of the cottages, but at this particular time God raised up a friend in the person of a Mr. Marshall, a farmer. He built on his own ground a wood and iron place for our people to preach in. A few years since Anmer was purchased by King Edward VII and added to his Norfolk estate. To the honour of his Majesty, let it be told, he has built a chapel for our people to worship God in, and for which a small rent is paid.

given on page 88, when the district was formed, that in 1907 the chapels reported numbered 197, having cost £83,759, with a present debt of £16,306 and a present value of £75,284, there are 33,152 sittings in these chapels, and the number of hear-



REV. A. BANHAM.



MR. G. GREEN, ST. IVES,  
*Treasurer, Temperance Committee.*

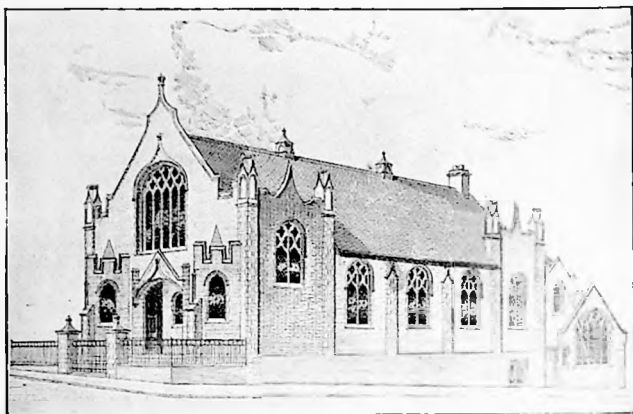
other district in the Connexion holds an Annual Convention of so long duration as those held in this district, in fact the district may be regarded as the pioneer of such gatherings.

In the Annual Teachers' and Scholars' Competitive Examinations in the Connexion the district has occupied a prominent place. Three Gold Medals have come to it, each of the winners being connected with Watton School. In 1901, the first year in which these medals were

One of the outstanding developments in the work of the district was the establishment of the Annual Sunday School Conference in 1893, the first of these gatherings being held at Soham. In 1901 this Annual Conference became the Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Convention, and was held at Watton that year. These gatherings of Sunday School and Christian Endeavour workers have done much to stimulate interest in the work of the agencies that the delegates to the Convention are connected with. No



MR. H. WATTS,  
Adelaide (Ely Circuit),  
*Treasurer, Missionary Committee.*



THE BUCKENHAM MEMORIAL CHURCH, FAKENHAM.

offered, Miss R. E. Garner (now Mrs. F. Edwards) won the Teachers' Medal; in 1902, Mr. H. J. Harvey won the Senior Scholars' Medal; and in 1903, the writer won the Teachers' Medal.

The statistics for the Sunday Schools of the district, as given in the Annual Report for 1907, record 190 schools, 1,736 teachers, 10,535 scholars, and 69 branches of the Bible and Prayer Union with 2,619 members.

The Christian Endeavour Societies reported to the Conference of 1907 numbered 83 Young People's Societies, with 1,740 active members and 652 associates, and 21 Junior Societies, with 580 members.

The district has throughout its history manifested considerable interest in foreign missions, temperance work, and the connexional orphanages.

Officials and members on the circuits have been elected to the various administrative councils,—county, district, and parish, in connection with their different localities. Others

have been appointed as magistrates, and many have through Primitive Methodism risen from the toiling masses of the people to positions of influence.

We close this review by quoting again from "Arcady: For Better, For Worse," by that catholic-spirited historian, Dr. Jessop, who says, "Explain it how we will, and draw our inferences as we choose, there is no denying it that in hundreds of parishes



REV. J. W. WHITTAKER.

in England the stuffy little chapel by the wayside has been the only place where for many a long day the very existence of religious emotion has been recognized; the only place in which the yearnings of the soul and its strong cryings and tears have been allowed to express themselves in the language of the moment unfettered by rigid forms; the only place where the agonized conscience has been encouraged and invited to rid itself of its sore burden by confession,



REV. A. NAYLOR.

\* "Arcady: for Better, for Worse," by Canon Jessop, D.D. Published by T. Fisher Unwin.





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**Mr. THOS. ROBINSON, J.P.,**  
Fish Docks,  
Grimsby.

*General Secretary—*  
**Rev. JOHN FLETCHER PORTER,**  
50, Cawley Road,  
Hackney, London, N.E.



MR. H. HERRING,  
Fakenham.

and comforted by at least the semblance of sympathy; the only place where the peasantry have enjoyed the free expression of their opinions, and where under an organization elaborated with extraordinary sagacity, they have kept up a school of music, literature, and politics, self-supporting and unaided by dole or subsidy, — above all, a school of eloquence, in which the lowliest has become familiarized with the ordinary rules of debate, and has been trained to express himself with directness, vigour, and fluency. What the Society of Jesus was among the more cultured classes in the sixteenth

century, what the friars were to the masses in the towns during the thirteenth, that the Primitive Methodists are in a fair way of becoming among the labouring classes in East Anglia in our own time." Hence, —

- " Go, labour on while it is day,  
The world's dark night is hastening on;  
Speed, speed thy work, cast sloth away:  
It is not thus that souls are won.
- " Toil on, faint not, keep watch and pray;  
Be wise the erring soul to win;  
Go forth into the world's highway,  
Compel the wanderer to come in.
- " Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice;  
For toil comes rest, for exile home;  
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,  
'The midnight cry, ' Behold I come!' "

# WHITECHAPEL Primitive Methodist Mission.

The rescue and redemptive work of Whitechapel Mission during the past *Eleven Years* has been most remarkable and successful. The spiritual and social blessings which have attended the various efforts of the Mission Staff are most gratifying.



*Rev. Thomas Jackson.*

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This remarkable work is carried on without cost to any Connexional Fund.

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Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by **REV. THOMAS JACKSON**, Working Lads' Institute, 279, Whitechapel Road, London, E.

## CHAPTER IX.

**Miscellaneous and Conclusion.**

**T**HERE are a few incidents to relate concerning some of those, whose photos have been given previously.

Mr. Bensley Redhead\* first entered the regular ministry, but afterwards retired, and lived for many years to wield a powerful influence in Downham Market Circuit.

Mrs. Fisher\* was one of the 'Godly women' of the Manea portion of Downham Market Circuit, abundant in service, reminding us that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are without distinction of sex.

Mr. Walter Goddard\* died Sunday, Feb. 24th, 1907. For more than half a century he was an outstanding figure in the life of Downham Market Circuit. After fifty-four years of service as a local preacher, about a month before his death, he said, "I calculate I have preached 7,000 times and travelled 25,000 miles." Rev. George Bell says, "he might safely have added, 'and seen hundreds of people converted.'"

Mr. and Mrs. Harpert† entertained Hugh Bourne, and it is said, also William Clowes, at their home at Helhoughton. Mrs. Harper became a local preacheress at twenty-four years of age, continuing as such for forty-two years, until her death. She was also superintendent of the Sunday School for twenty-three years. These did noble pioneer work in this village. The writer was recently informed by one of the officers of this Sunday School that so far as the teachers knew, there was not a child of school age in the village, who did not belong to either our own or the Anglican church Sunday School. We would earnestly desire that such a statement could be made of all the villages on the district.

Mr. Benjamin Challis† relates that when he first joined the Primitive Methodists at Town Street, Brandon, they had for a chapel, a building with the bare ground as the floor, stools for seats, and no pulpit.

\* See page 63.

† See page 71.

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MR. J. CURRY, DOCKING.



REV. ROBERT WARD.

Sailed from London, May 1st, 1844, for New Zealand; landed at New Plymouth Aug. 29th



MR. J. EDWARDS,  
Watton.



REV. J. G. WRIGHT.

Born at Sculthorpe, 1822; Sailed for Australia, 1855;  
Died at East Adelaide, 1904.



REV. JOSEPH JOHNSON.

# Primitive Methodist **SOUTH-EAST LONDON MISSION.**

HEADQUARTERS—

**ST. GEORGE'S HALL, OLD KENT ROAD, S.E.**  
.....

BRANCHES—

East Street, Walworth, S.E.;  
Sisters' Settlement, 118, Old Kent Rd.;  
Social Institute, 99, Old Kent Road;  
Cripples' Hall, Rear of Social Institute;  
South London Lodging Houses;  
Cripples' Home, Westcliff-on-Sea.

.....  
**St. George's Hall** is a great soul-saving centre;  
**Open doors** all day long;  
**Uplifts** men, women, and children;  
**Trains** the saved to save others;  
**Helps** the disheartened and the despairing to a new start.

**East Street Branch** daily reaches out its hand,  
**And seeks** to rescue the fallen and save the falling,  
**Saves** drunkards and gamblers from their vices,  
**Teaches** the blasphemer and the sensualist the better life.

**Leaning** on God for strength and resources,  
**Our Mission** persistently goes on with its work,  
**Never** despairing of any man or woman;  
**Does** nothing for personal gain, but  
**On every occasion** lays hold of the helpless,  
**Not doubting** there is salvation for the worst.

**Many children**, crippled in body and circumstance,  
**Invite** daily care and sympathy;  
**Starving**, friendless, shoeless, and hungry,  
**Swarming** in the courts and alleys of these slums, they  
**Implore** us to consider and help them.  
**Our urgent need** is more money, more clothing,  
**No opportunity** for service would then be refused.

## **FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED.**

Gifts of love and sympathy should be sent to the SUPERINTENDENT—

**Rev. JOSEPH JOHNSON,**

**St. George's Hall, Old Kent Road, S.E.**



MR. C. FISHER,  
Sedgeford

Mr. William Lift\*, of Lynn, was a local preacher over 61 years. He attended upwards of 40 district meetings, being elected President of the meeting one year; he was also appointed delegate to 10 conferences.

Mr. James Whalebelly,† who died in 1899, was one of the pioneers in Watton Circuit. He never sought a position of district eminence, but was content to do his work in his own town and circuit. Such men have been the makers of Primi-

tive Methodism in many places.

Mr. John Read‡ was a local preacher for 64 years, superintendent of St. Peter's Street Sunday School, Cambridge, for 57 years, and circuit steward, 1837 to 1887, when he retired.

Mr. Daniel Dunnett§ was a member over 60 years, local preacher for 58 years, founder of the Watton Sunday School and its superintendent 45 years, also the circuit



MR. R. RAINES,  
Decking.

\*See p. 75. †See p. 93.

‡See p. 59.



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SHOULD TAKE THE

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MR. J. CHAPMAN,  
Longstanton (St. Ives Circuit).

and society steward. For upwards of half a century he was a tower of strength, first in the old Brandon Circuit, and afterwards in the Watton Circuit.

An event, probably unique in Primitive Methodism, was the celebration of the jubilee of five local preachers on Downham Market Circuit, in January, 1907. Illuminated addresses were presented to Messrs. Walter Goddard, W. S. Proctor, and William Lewis, and bound copies of the Connexional History to Messrs. C. Leflay and M. Forth.

The list of ministers who have gone out from the district includes, in addition to those previously mentioned, such men as the Rev. Robert Bryant, who was born at Northwold, and became General Book Steward; Rev. J. P. Langham, born at Lynn, and was Secretary of Conference in 1897; Rev. John Smith, from Downham Market Circuit, whose name is written large in the history of our foreign missions, and who became President of Conference in 1898; Rev. William Kirby, of South Wootton, Lynn Circuit; Rev. William Filby, of Hepworth; Rev. Robert Ward, born at Sporle, and became a pioneer missionary to New Zealand; Rev. John Gibbon Wright, born at Sculthorpe, and became a pioneer missionary to Australia; Rev. Henry Buckenham,



REV. J. W. VENABLES.

of Fakenham, whose name is indelibly inscribed in the annals of our African Missions; Rev. Robert Banham, of Barnham, also an African missionary; Rev. George Seaman, born at Magdalen, and became Governor of Elmfield College; Rev. W. A. Hammond, from Fakenham Circuit, now vice to the General Book Steward; Rev. W. R. Bird, from the same circuit, now one of the Connexional Evangelists; Rev. Joseph Johnson, from Over, now Secretary of the Bible Reading and Prayer Union; and Rev. W. L. Wardle, M.A., B.D., Tutor at the Hartley College, Manchester; besides a number of others who have done

noble and continuous work for many years on various circuits in the Connexion.

Amongst the ministers who have laboured on the district, in addition to those already referred to, are the honoured names of the Revs. Henry Gunns, William H. Meadows, Thomas Swindell, Jonathan Scott, William Hammond, Henry Alderslade, and others. The mention of these names will, doubtless, recall to many of our readers, inspiring words and stirring scenes of bygone days.

We must not close this review of the district without referring to a missionary meeting, which was an epoch-making event in the history of the Connexion.

"Contemplated Primitive Methodist Mission to South Africa.—At a missionary meeting, which was held at Swaffham, Norfolk, May 3rd, 1852, in connection with the twenty-



REV. HENRY BUCKENHAM.

seventh annual meeting of the Norwich District, 'The place was shaken where they were assembled,' the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and without premeditation or design, on the part of the assembled brethren, the claims of Africa, with its vast population of 70 millions, were so forcibly impressed upon the hearts of the people that immediately the munificent sum of £40 5s. was subscribed in furtherance of the above object. At the same time, the following ministers, Thomas Lowe, William Wood, and John G. Wright, presented themselves as 'the messengers of the

churches' to the dark-browed tribes of Africa. Hallelujah! 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.'"

Such was the appeal issued from that remarkable missionary meeting. Following the appeal was a list of the subscribers of the £40 5s.

In conclusion, we desire to say that the sizes and positions of the photos in this souvenir must not be regarded as indicating any order of merit. Economy, both in regard to cost and space, has had to be considered, many of the larger blocks being lent.

We again acknowledge our indebtedness to the various books referred to herein, especially the Connexional History by the Rev. H. B. Kendall, B.A., and thank the authors and all others concerned for the use of the same.

May these Centenary celebrations infuse all with a more earnest desire to

"Labour on: for

The labourers are few, the field is wide,  
New stations must be filled and blanks supplied;  
From voices distant far, or near at home,  
The call is, 'Come!'"

## Circuits on the District and Places belonging to each.

- LYNN** (London Rd.), Highgate, North End, Harpley, Rougham, Grimston, Gayton Thorpe, West Newton, Massingham, East Winch, St. German's, Gayton, Terrington, West Winch, Wootton, Clench-warton, East Walton, St. Mary's, Fair Green.
- FINCHAM** (Branch), Marham, Shouldham Thorpe, Wormegay, Magdalen, Tottenhill, Shouldham, Holme, Watlington, Wereham, Magdalen Fen.
- CAMBRIDGE I** (St. Peter's Street), Pantou Street, Oakington, Toft, Dry Drayton, Childerley Gate, Longstanton.
- CAMBRIDGE II** (Tabernacle), Sturton Street, Fen Ditton, Sawston, Haslingfield.
- FAKENHAM**, Little Ryburgh, Great Ryburgh, Sculthorpe, Little Snoring, Brisley, Colkirk, Whissonsett, Gately, Broom Green, Horningtoft, Dunton, Stanfield, Hempton.
- DOWNHAM**, Upwell, Outwell, Hilgay, Ten Mile Bank, Stow Bridge, Salter's Lode, Wretton, Marshland Fen, Three Holes, Bardolph Fen, West Dereham, Wimbotsham.
- WATTON**, Thompson, Saham, Little Cressingham, Bodney, Ovington, Ashill, Great Cressingham, Caston.
- WISBECH**, Elm, Tilney Fen End, Tilney St. Lawrence, Leverington, Murrow, Tholomas Drove, Cross Keys, Walpole, Walsoken, West Walton, Tydd Gote, Walpole Marsh, Emneth, Harrold Bridge, Guy-hirn, Walpole Highway, Sutton Bridge, Wisbech St. Mary, Tydd St. Giles Fen, Walton Highway, Tydd St. Giles, Marshland Smeeth, March.
- SWAFFHAM**, Castleacre, Weasenham, Litcham, Sporle, Bradenham, Little Dunham, Westacre, Helhoughton, Lexham, Tittleshall, Wendling, Great Dunham, Mileham, North Pickenham.
- STOWMARKET**, Old Newton, Earl Stonham, Wyverstone, Coddanham, Ringshall, Buxhall, Stonham Aspal, Creting All Saints, Ward Green.
- ELY**, Littleport, Prickwillow, Steam Engine, Brandon Creek, Sutton, Witchford, Brandon Bank, Adelaide.
- BURY ST. EDMUND'S**, Woolpit, Finningham, Pakenham, Honington, Westhorpe, Ixworth, Bradfield, Bardwell, Thurston.
- DOCKING**, Bircham, Rudham, Flitcham, Syderstone, Houghton, Anmer, Snettisham, Dersingham, Sedgelord, Holme, Thornham, Stanhoe, Heacham, Brancaster Town, Burnham Market, Fring, Ringstead, Brancaster Staithe, Burnham Overy Staithe, Burnham Thorpe.
- THETFORD**, East Harling, Hockham, Shropham, Hepworth, Hopton, Garboldisham, Blo' Norton, Croxton, Barnham, Barningham, Market Weston, Stanton.
- SOHAM**, Wicken, Isleham, Cross Bank, Soham Fen, Fordham, Burwell.
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